Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-91-062
Monday
1 April 1991

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FBIS-NES-91-062 *1 April 1991*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Meeting Opens in Cairo 30 Mar

To Build 'Arab Solidarity'

NC3003131991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1149 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council's 95th ordinary session opened at the league's permanent headquarters in Cairo this morning.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the 21 Arab countries at the level of permanent delegates. It is the first ordinary session of the league council to be held at its permanent headquarters in Cairo since the league council resolution in Tunis last March returned the league to its permanent headquarters in Cairo. It had been in Tunis for about 10 years.

Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, head of the Arab desk at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, represented Iraq at the meeting because Iraq has not yet appointed a permanent delegate to the Arab League.

The Arab countries' ambassadors in Cairo are these countries' representatives to the league, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, which is represented by Shaykh Tahir Radwan.

Qatar's delegate is expected to hand over the chairmanship to Kuwait; according to alphabetical order, Kuwait chairs this session.

At the beginning of the session, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Egyptian deputy prime minister and foreign minister, delivered a speech. He said the league council's meetings in Cairo today are a vivid symbol of the collective Arab support for the Arab League's role and mission. He said that Egypt is determined to cooperate with all fraternal Arab countries to achieve this goal, which we all cherish.

He added that this meeting has additional and special importance as it comes after the liberation of the sisterly State of Kuwait, the restoration of legitimacy there, and after Kuwait became once again a free and independent state, assuming its constructive role within the Arab family. This represents a new staging point for joint Arab action.

He went on: We are certain that, in view of the importance of studying the Gulf events, we should absorb the experience, learn its lessons, and work to avoid the recurrence of these events. Our discussions should be completely frank and clear; this is a time for frankness not flattery.

He pointed out that today's meeting is a historic one by all measures, on which the whole world's eyes are focused, and that Cairo has always lived with the pulse of Arabism and with the Arab people's ambitions.

He stressed that pan-Arab security must rely on the Arab League Charter, the joint Arab defense treaty, and on settling disputes among Arab countries peacefully.

He said: The next phase requires serious work on our part to unify ranks and heal divisions. Clearing the Arab atmosphere and restoring confidence among Arab countries are our main goals to achieve genuine and effective Arab solidarity and integration that represents the image of the Arab nation and stems from its joint interests.

In this respect, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said Egypt believes that any Arab arrangements to provide security for all Arab countries must rely on the Arab League Charter, the joint defense treaty, economic cooperation among the Arab League member countries, and on settling disputes among Arab countries by peaceful means. He noted that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the region is an important goal and basic element to provide security in the region, on the condition that this applies to all countries of the region.

In his address, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said that working out a just and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue must be based on Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and on the Palestinian people's national and inalienable rights, which have been recognized by international legitimacy. Foremost among these rights are their right to determine their future, establish their state, and participate as a principal side in all efforts.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister stressed the need for building unified Arab economic action on a firm basis unaffected by differences in opinion that might occur from time to time between Arab countries.

Text of 'Abd-al-Majid Opening Remarks

NC3003180391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1630 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, today delivered Egypt's speech at the opening of the Arab League's 95th session in Cairo. In his speech, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid defined how Egypt envisions the future of joint Arab action. Following is the text of the speech:

Mr. President, Your Excellency the Acting Secretary General of the Arab League; Messrs. ambassadors, permanent representatives of the fraternal Arab countries to the Arab League. At the outset, I would like to welcome you in your second country, Egypt, which has long taken pride in its Arab affiliation and done its best on various occasions to substantiate this in word and deed.

I welcome you to the headquarters of the Arab League, the house of all Arabs, to which we all turn during times of hardship and wellbeing alike. We will do whatever is in our power to safeguard and strengthen this house so that it will always remain the most authentic reflection of

the unified Arab will and the determination of the Arab nation to confront the fiercest challenges.

Our meeting today is a historic meeting by every standard. It will not be an exaggeration if I say that the attention of the whole world is now focused on this meeting. The convening of the 95th session of the Arab League gains added importance inasmuch as it is the first ordinary session of the Arab League to be held at the league's headquarters in Cairo since 1978. This happened after the implementation of Resolution 4983 of session no. 93 of the Arab League in March 1990, and Resolutions 5042 and 5043 of the league's special session on 10 September 1990, which provide for the return of the Arab League to its headquarters as stipulated by Article 10 of the league's charter. Thus, at these moments, the Arab nation marks the end of one stage in its history and ushers in a new stage in unified Arab action.

Throughout the past historical stage, Cairo has been close to the pulse of Arabism and close to the hopes and ambitions of brotherly Arab peoples and countries. Cairo has also honored its commitments toward the Arab nation.

Esteemed brothers: This meeting is a living symbol of the comprehensive Arab course of action, which makes it imperative to support the role of the Arab League and its mission. In this regard, Egypt is determined to cooperate with all brotherly Arab countries to achieve this goal that we all cherish.

You are not unaware that our meeting today gains additional importance, since it comes after the liberation of the brotherly State of Kuwait and the restoration of legitimacy and after Kuwait has become once again a free, independent country contributing constructively to the Arab family. This represents a new starting point for the march of joint Arab action.

We meet today on a joint path, agreeing on a number of principles that unite us in our movement and march. I do not think we will miss our aims if we make the Arab League Charter our guide and adhere to the provisions of the Joint Defense Pact and Economic Cooperation Agreement among the states of the Arab League, as well as the rules of international legitimacy. I am certain that while the discussion of the Gulf events is important, we must understand this experiment, learn the lesson, and prevent such a thing from recurring. Our discussion must be permeated by total frankness and clarity because this is the time for plain speaking and not compliments. As President Muhammad Husni Mubarak said in his 3 March speech at the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council meeting, the required frankness must adhere to the truth, must be constructive and not destructive, protective and not divisive. We do not want a separation between the [Arab] east and the [Arab] west. We do not want the Arab nation to become two nations, we do not want the Arab peoples to become divided peoples. The Arab world has before it fateful issues. Opinions must converge on means of facing them and putting them on the right path.

The events that the Arab nation has witnessed inflicted grave losses on all the Arab peoples and we hope that these losses will be made good in a short time. I believe that we are taking big strides to compensate these losses.

It is natural that our paths may differ in choosing ways we deem fit to reach our aims and ensure our pan-Arab interests. These differences should not lead to a loss of amity among us.

Respected brothers, the spirit of the age in which we live, with which we interact and which affects us requires us to devote our efforts anew to working on the principles on which joint Arab action has been based over the past decades. There is no hope in the future if our march is not united and if we do not wage the battles of construction hand in hand with a genuine pan-Arab spirit within a perfect commitment to the principles and aims of joint Arab action.

In this age, which is full of changes and transformations, we bear major responsibility before our people and future generations in preparing our states to deal with these numerous changes and transformations, which represent a challenge to us in the field of pan-Arab security, foreign policy and economy, regional and international cooperation, and issues of Arab political changes and social transformations.

In my judgment, the starting-point should stem from rereading and analyzing the texts of the basic charters that govern unified Arab action and to comply anew with the principles and goals outlined in these basic charters. The regional Arab order's stability and security are contingent upon our commitment to these principles and goals. The Damascus meeting that included the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman—as well as Egypt and Syria was in this line. The Damascus Declaration that was released by this meeting on 6 March, 1991 represents a genuine pan-Arab translation of this course. The Damascus Declaration emphasized commitment to the principles of the Arab League charter, the joint defense treaty and economic cooperation among the Arab League countries, and the laws of international legitimacy. The declaration mirrored the sincere intentions for work to bolster joint Arab action and establish security with its political and economic sense. This declaration is open to all fraternal Arab countries that agree to its principles which only revive the principles that govern Arab relations. From this premise, the declaration is not an axis but in fact represents one of the tributaries of unified Arab action that seeks to ensure security and stability on the one hand and to generate the necessary momentum to a comprehensive and balanced development in all Arab countries on the other. Also in this line was the assertion by the third ordinary summit of the fraternal member countries of the Arab Maghreb Union that convened in

Libya (?this) month on the need to strengthen the joint Arab action establishments, foremost the Arab League. This is considered to be an encouraging sign worthy of our utmost welcome and response.

Esteemed brothers, The future stage requires serious and arduous work to heal the rift and unify the ranks. Clearing the Arab atmosphere and restoring confidence among the Arab countries must be in the forefront of our goals to build genuine, effective, and lasting Arab solidarity and integration that express the nation's unity and common interests.

I believe that we should reach a common visualization of the nature of the many challenges facing us at present and in the future. Allow me to sum them up in the following (?pivotal) issues:

First: Pan-Arab Security

We all agree that pan-Arab security is in fact an intertwined and closely linked issue, and that the Arab countries' security as a whole is linked to the security of each member country in the Arab League. The Arab Republic of Egypt believes that any Arab arrangements to ensure security to all Arab countries must be based on the following principles:

a. These arrangements must rely on the Arab League charter and the treaty of joint Arab defense and economic cooperation among the Arab League countries.

b. Strict adherence to settling disputes among Arab countries through peaceful means, renouncing the use of force or threatening to use it in inter-Arab relations, emphasizing the importance of non-interference in any way in the domestic affairs of the Arab countries, and respecting the political and social systems prevailing in every Arab country.

c. The provision of Arab security is a joint and collective responsiblity among all the Arab countries. Hence, security arrangements must stem from within the regional Arab order.

d. Participation in these arrangements is effected through the full agreement of the Arab sides that wish to take part in them.

e. No arrangements should constitute an axis or a bloc against the non-participating parties.

f. These arrangements should be in line with the geographical proximity of the countries. This is one of the important factors for providing security and stability to the regional Arab order.

g. These arrangements should be in line with the requirements of international legitimacy and in harmony with the participating countries' commitments in accordance with the UN Charter.

h. Pan-Arab security is a comprehensive concept with political, military, economic, and social dimensions. We must always take this comprehensiveness into consideration when we talk about pan-Arab security.

i. The elimination of mass destruction weapons in the Middle East region is an important objective and one of the principal bases for providing security in the region, on condition that it is applied to all the countries in the region.

2. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue:

Finding a just and comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue is an historical trust in our hands. Hence, reaching such a settlement is one of the principal bases for security and stability in the Middle East and all across the Arab world. It is our assessment that resolving the Palestinian issue and finding a permanent solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based on the following:

a. Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied in June 1967.

b. Realizing the Palestinian people's national and inalienable rights which were approved by Arab, Islamic, and international legitimacy, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their state.

c. The Palestinian people's participation as a principal partner in all the efforts aimed at reaching a solution to the Palestinian issue.

d. The provision of security and stability for all the countries and peoples of the Middle East.

e. The international conference for peace in the Middle East is an appropriate framework for reaching a final solution to the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

3. United Arab action in the economic field:

The Arab countries have made a great stride toward the formulation of a common concept of the means to achieve a comprehensive and balanced development in the Arab countries based on the conviction of us all that the Arab development process must be complementary and interlinked and that the drawing up of development plans on a purely regional basis does not bring full benefits to the Arab countries.

You may agree with me that joint Arab action in the economic field must be based on the following principles:

a. Each Arab state's sovereignty over its natural and economic resources.

b. The need to modernize the strategies of the joint Arab economic action in a manner that would take into consideration the current and future developments in international economic relations in light of the emergence of huge economic blocs such as the EEC, the free trade zone between the United States and Canada, the free trade zone among some Latin American countries, and the Asian tigers phenomenon.

c. Promoting and bolstering the performance of the Arab development funds.

d. The Arab states' adoption of the policies and measures that would encourage Arab capital to be invested in the Arab states and to provide it with all legal guarantees and protection.

e. The need to establish joint Arab economic action on firm bases that will not be affected by differences in viewpoints that may occur among the Arab states from time to time.

f. The need to acquire and utilize technology in the Arab world.

g. Giving the issue of water resources in the Arab world the attention it deserves due to the fact that this is a serious issue affecting the security and stability of all the Arab states.

I believe that the aforementioned constitute the major objectives of our work in the future stage, and that the continuation of stability and security of the regional Arab order hinges on our seriousness in dealing with these issues with a genuine pan-Arab spirit whose objective is to achieve the higher pan-Arab interests—a spirit that realizes that differences in ways and means to secure these interests must not lead to estrangement among the Arab states.

Let the Arab League Council's 95th session be a new starting point in the history of the Arab League and in the march of joint Arab action. Let it be the bridge on which we will cross from the pains of crises to the hopes of the future. Let it be our tool to achieve Arab reconciliation and to proceed toward a better future.

Esteemed brothers, the Arab League is for all the Arab states. It is the final outcome of the collective wills of these states. I would like to seize this opportunity to reaffirm that Egypt, government and people, will secure all that is possible to enable the Arab League to play its leading and effective role in serving all the Arab issues. As President Muhammad Husni Mubarak said on 26 March on the occasion of the return of the vanguards of the Egyptian forces from the Gulf, Egypt is truthful to its stand and the world. Egypt is strong through its faith and principles, lofty through its national unity, and hopes for an Arab environment that respects rights and duties, and an Arab peace that reinforces ties, protects the present, and builds the future. May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

Iraq's Hammudi Arrives

NC2003141491 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1351 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (INA)—Ambassador Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, director of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry's Arab Department, arrived in Cairo at noon today. Hammudi will head his country's delegation to the Arab League Council meeting scheduled to begin in Cairo tomorrow, Saturday.

Upon arrival at Cairo Airport from Amman, Hammudi stated that Iraq's participation in the meeting confirms Iraq's concern for joint Arab action and bolstered Arab solidarity. He said Iraq's participation will be positive.

Says UN Draft 'Still Under Study'

NC3003164091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1623 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Ambassador Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, head of Iraq's delegation to the Arab League meeting, has said that the permanent cease-fire draft resolution being discussed at the Security Council is still under study. He asserted, however, that Iraq does not accept this resolution because it does injustice to the rights of his country, as he put it.

In his statement, Hammudi explained that Iraq agrees to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the region provided that this is applied to all the countries of the region, including Israel and Iran.

Calls Meeting 'Useful'

NC3003174891 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Mustafa Bakri dispatch from Cairo]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, Iraqi representative to the Arab League Council meeting and director of the Arab desk at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, said that the Arab League Council meeting today was useful and necessary and a positive step for continuing joint Arab action after the crisis, which, he said, caused a rift in inter-Arab relations. He said that Iraq is in constant touch with all its Arab brothers. He noted that the common spirit that prevailed in the meeting on the need to overcome the ordeal and learn the lessons of the past experience is an indication of the concern of all parties and their conviction that the Arab League is the best framework to address all Arab issues. [passage omitted]

Palestinian, Tunisian Delgations Arrive

NC3003023391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2241 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—Hakam Bal'awi, Palestinian ambassador to Tunisia and head of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab League arrived in Cairo tonight from Tunis to attend the meetings of the Arab League council that will open in Cairo tomorrow [30 March].

Upon arrival, Hakam Bal'awi said that the meetings of the Arab League council in Cairo will prove to the world that the Arab people are working for the future with one opinion and thought to realize their national goals, foremost of which is the fate of the Palestinian people.

Bal'awi said that the league's meeting this time, with all the members attending, will be a good, successful, and responsible beginning for joint Arab work. He noted that the Arab League's council will concentrate its discussions on finding a solution to the Palestinian issue.

Ambassador Salah al-Din al-Jimali [name as received], head of the Arab Affairs Desk at the Tunisian Foreign Ministry, arrived on the same plane to lead his country's delegation to the meetings of the Arab League council.

Date for Ministers' Meeting To Be Set

NC3003121791 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1200 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council has decided to keep its 95th session, which started in Cairo today, an open session. The Council has authorized Acting Arab League Secretary General As'ad al-As'ad to conduct exchanges with Arab foreign ministers to set a date for the next Arab League meeting at the foreign-minister level.

This was announced by As'ad al-As'ad at the end of the one-hour closed session held today.

Next League Meeting in Cairo 15 May

NC3103074491 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0520 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Writing about the meetings of the Arab League Council, the newspaper AL-AKHBAR says that the Arab states' representatives have decided to postpone their meetings to allow further consultations among the Arab foreign ministers. The paper adds that the next meetings of the Arab League Council will be held in Cairo on 15 May. The paper adds that these meetings will discuss new topics to be added to the agenda, including security arrangements, the new Arab order, economic cooperation, and amending the Arab League Charter to ensure that the charter is implemented by all member states.

Official: No Decision To Cut Aid to Jordan, PLO

NC0104180391 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] 'Abdallah Bisharah, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], said in Riyadh this afternoon that the GCC countries did not make a collective decision to cut financial aid to Jordan and the PLO.

Bisharah's statement was made to clarify statements attributed to him at a press conference he held in Kuwait two days ago. Some media reported that aid to Jordan and the PLO had been suspended. In this respect, the GCC secretary general said that the statements attributed to him are not in agreement with what he actually said during the press conference. He said that he had not discussed this issue during his press conference.

For the record, Bisharah said that the GCC member states had not made a collective decision to halt the aid, and no such decision is recorded in the GCC documents. He added that the discussion in general dealt with the relationship with Jordan and the leadership of the PLO, including the issue of aid, without making any specific decision in this respect.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Denies Helping Iraqi Army Quell Rebellion

LD2903172591 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1602 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] A PLO spokesman stated the following yesterday: A statement issued by the Iraqi Da'wah party alleges that Palestinian forces are participating in internal Iraqi incidents on the side of the Iraqi Army. This is false and untrue. The Iraqi Army has never been, either in the past or the present, in need of such participation.

It is our concern to affirm that such allegations come within the framework of the campaign of conspiracy and misinformation against our Palestinian people and its just struggle and serve only the enemies of Palestine, Arabism, and Islam, whose aim is to stir up a fabricated storm against the PLO.

Hawatimah Demands Collective PLO Leadership

NC3003180591 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, today demanded that the PLO leadership be transformed into a collective leadership in order to end the practices that harmed the PLO. Hawatimah declared that the PLO will remain the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people but added that it needs reconstruction on a democratic basis and requires rectification of relations between those inside and those outside the occupied territories, giving those inside the right to administer and develop the intifadah and to contribute to PLO decision-making on the general national level.

'Arafat Adviser Notes Significance of Land Day

LD3003164391 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpts] In the shadow of the legacy of the Gulf war, the return of the Palestinian issue to the forefront of international diplomatic moves, and the escalation of the Palestinian intifadah, the Palestinian people today mark Land Day, which is characterized by the fragmented Arab situation as a result of the Gulf crisis. [passage omitted]

Bassam Abu-Sharif, adviser to Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, presents to us the historic and political significance of this day:

[Begin Abu-Sharif recording] Land Day is a day on which the Palestinians celebrate the depth of their roots

in their land, which was occupied by the Israelis, who are still trying to occupy and swallow what is remaining of it in preparation for the implementation of their expansionist ambitions under their slogan: From the Nile to the Euphrates. Land Day is the day on which the Palestinians declare to the Arab nation, the Islamic nation, and the whole world that their roots are deep and that it is impossible for the Zionist invasion to extirpate them. Our roots in our land every day sprout a new green tree, new branches, awaiting the day of liberation. We declare to the whole world that we will not give up our rights on our land, the land of our forefathers. This day is also a day on which we politically declare that the Palestinian people, who are resisting the Israeli occupation with all the force they have and all the means at their disposal, will continue to resist this occupation while at the same time raising the sacred olive branch and putting forward a just political solution and a historic bargain: the solution of two states on the land of Palestine. [end recording]

Regarding the reflections of the Gulf crisis on the Palestinian cause and the Israeli attempts to remove the PLO from the international political arena, Bassam Abu-Sharif stated:

[Begin recording] On this day in particular, and after the Gulf war and what it led to, Land Day acquires an additional dimension and new political meaning, as it declares on top of this that the PLO cannot be excluded by anyone from any forthcoming political solution, because the PLO is the Palestinian people. He who wants to exclude the PLO seeks the exclusion of the Palestinian people. This cannot establish peace, a solution, stability, or security in the Middle East. Today in particular, after the destructive war in the Gulf, the Palestinian people raise their voices high and loud and say that, irrespective of the attempts by the circles hostile to our people, the Arab nation, and the Islamic nation to exclude the PLO and its Chairman Yasir 'Arafat will not succeed. We say once again on Land Day that our roots go deeply in the land, as do those of the PLO and of the symbol of Palestinian struggle, Yasir 'Arafat. We say to the whole world that we are ready for peace, but at the same time we reject capitulation, and we will continue to resist the occupation until the last Israeli soldier leaves our pure Arab land and we return to noble Jerusalem, the first of the two qiblahs [direciton of Muslim prayers] and home of the third holiest mosque [al-Aqsa]. This is the pledge we make to our Arab nation and to our Islamic nation. [end recording]

'Abd-Rabbuh on Talks With Soviet Delegation

NC3003165091 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] A Soviet delegation led by Mr. Vasiliy Kolotusha, head of the Middle East and Northern Africa Department at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, has held talks with the Palestinian leadership in Tunisia.

Mr. Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, member of the PLO Central Committee, spoke to our news desk about these talks. He said:

[Begin recording] The talks that took place during the past two days with the Soviet delegation dealt with the recent developments in the aftermath of the Gulf war and the need to reactivate international efforts so as to tackle the Palestine question and the Middle East issue according to the criteria and resolutions of international legitimacy. For our part, we asserted that there is a basic duty that lies with the USSR and the European countries: namely, the need to work to convene a special session of the Security Council to discuss the Middle East issue and implement the resolutions of international legitimacy as well as to find the appropriate mechanism to implement such resolutions on the rights of the Palestinian people and the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. This is especially so since the Gulf war is over and that international legitimacy has now been transformed into a basis that many countries adhere to in addressing and resolving various regional crises.

We have, in fact, sensed positive understanding from the Soviet side on this matter. There will also be contacts shortly with many European countries for the same purpose. The major obstacle, however, is the U.S. position, which still insists on adopting two different standards. For while the United States insisted on the implementation of international legitimacy in the Gulf, it is now trying to apply a totally different standard concerning the Palestine question and the Middle East issue. This standard is in fact not in keeping with all the international resolutions issued by the Security Council and the United Nations in order to resolve the central issue in the region, the Palestine question. [end recording]

Egypt

Mubarak, Al-Asad Conduct Series of Talks

31 Mar Private Session Noted

NC3103203091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1853 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad held a tete-a-tete session of talks at the presidential office in Heliopolis this evening.

Members of the Egyptian and Syrian delegations also held a separate session of talks, which was attended on the Egyptian side by Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi; Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Mahir Abazah, minister of electricity and energy and head of the honor delegation accompanying the Syrian president; and Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz, Egypt's ambassador to Syria.

The meeting was attended on the Syrian side by Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and the Syrian ambassador in Cairo.

Discuss Postwar Gulf Situation

NC3103214591 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad held a three-hour bilateral session of talks at the presidential office following the banquet to break the fast that President Mubarak gave in honor of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and the delegation accompanying him. The talks dealt mainly with the situation after the Gulf war, the security arrangements in the region, and ways to heal the Arab rift. The two presidents also discussed the issue of international and regional conferences on achieving peace in the Middle East. The talks will resume at the al-Qubbah Palace tomorrow morning.

Members of the Egyptian and Syrian delegations held talks. They were attended on the Egyptian side by Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi; Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Mahir Abazah, minister of electricity and energy and head of the honor delegation accompanying the Syrian president; and Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz, Egypt's ambassador to Syria.

The meeting was attended on the Syrian side by Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and the Syrian ambassador in Cairo.

Information Minister Views Meeting

NC3103234191 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2306 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA)—Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said that Syria and Egypt hold identical views on the regional situation, especially in the Gulf.

Al-Sharif said this to the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY after the first round of talks between Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad.

The Damascus Delcaration signed by Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf Cooperation Council expressed this convergence of views, the minister added.

Al-Sharif described the Syrian-Egyptian march as being one of right and principle and said that it calls for a unity of Arab ranks and joint Arab action in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.

He said we are optimistic about the results expected from this march in the interest of true pan-Arab security and its future.

On the Syrian-Egyptian summit in Cairo, the minister said such meetings give momentum to bilateral cooperation based on the lessons learned from the Gulf crisis.

The al-Asad-Mubarak meeting, he said, confirms the principles learned from Egypt and Syria's role in safeguarding pan-Arab security and facing challenges to the Arab nation.

On Iraq, the minister said we stand by the people of Iraq and the country's territorial integrity.

Talks Resume 1 Apr

NC0104102291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1002 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad held talks this morning at the al-Qubbah Presidential Palace.

The two presidents will complete the discussion of all issues raised during their talks yesterday regarding the results of the Gulf war, the means to heal the Arab rift, the international conference and the regional conference [al-mu'tamar al-duwali wa al-mu'tamar al-iqlimi] to achieve peace, and regional security arrangements.

Closed Session Lasts One Hour

NC0104110891 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1046 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—The closed session of talks between Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad lasted for almost an hour. The two presidents were then joined by members of the two countries' delegations in an expanded session lasting about 45 minutes.

The talks were attended for Egypt by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi; Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and Dr. Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz, Egypt's ambassador to Syria. For Syria the talks were attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Syrian Ambassador to Cairo 'Isa Darwish.

Hold Joint News Conference

NC0104123091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1208 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has stated that as soon as the problems in the Gulf region are over, he will demand the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

In a joint news conference today with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad prior to a send-off ceremony for President al-Asad, President Mubarak said the international conference to resolve the Middle East problem constitutes a good umbrella for bilateral talks, but what is important is a good preparation for the conference.

For his part, President al-Asad stressed during the news conference, which was held in the al-Qubbah Presidential Palace, that the cleansing of the Arab atmosphere will take place at the appropriate time. He said that he believes this issue does not require an Arab summit.

Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad pointed out that in their talks, they discussed all issues, including security arrangements and the role of other Arab states.

Asked whether President Mubarak and President al-Asad had discussed special proposals on an international peace conference and whether they had reached agreement on this subject, President Mubarak said: I believe that an agreement to attend an international peace conference based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338 was reached with former Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin. Likewise, former Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres agreed in Alexandria to attend such a conference. Hence, an international conference is a necessity. It is an umbrella under which all aspects of the problem can be discussed.

The president added: We do not demand the immediate convocation of an international conference. What is more important right now is to see good preparations made for convening such a conference so that we can achieve a solution to the problem and end the current stalemate.

President Mubarak was asked if he believes that a regional Middle East peace conference would be acceptable. His Excellency answered: What do you mean by a regional conference? The meaning is unclear to us. Do you mean the front-line states?

The journalist responded: I mean the front-line states: Israel, the United States, and possibly the Soviet Union; however, excluding the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

President Mubarak commented by saying: I believe that the presence of the permanent members of the UN Security Council in addition to the front-line countries—Syria, Egypt, the Palestinians, Jordan, and Lebanon—in addition to Israel will make the conference successful.

When asked about steps by Egypt and Syria to clear the air in Arab relations, President Mubarak said: In the Arab world we have grown accustomed to clearing the air. It requires time. When the time is right, we will clear the air.

President al-Asad said that all Arabs want to see the air cleared in Arab relations. He said: I agree with President Mubarak when he said that Arab (?solidarity) will be achieved with time.

When asked if he believes that an Arab summit should be held immediately to heal the Arab rift, President al-Asad said: I do not believe it would be appropriate at the moment.

Asked about the current situation in Iraq and whether he and President Mubarak discussed ways of stopping the bloodshed there, President al-Asad said: "We have discussed the Arab situation in general. What is happening in Iraq is very complicated, and all Arab citizens believe that it is a large internal problem in which many factors are involved. This matter pains us, but our ability to ease the situation have been limited."

Asked if an agreement was reached on specific steps regarding regional security, President Mubarak said: "So far, our clear plan is that the security steps should stem from the Gulf and Arab countries. They may need some help from foreign countries; namely, the United States and the other coalition states."

Responding to a question on the role of Iran and Turkey in the security arrangements, President Mubarak said: "Iran is part of the Gulf region, but we did not discuss this issue."

Asked if it is possible to reach an Arab solution given the presence of the foreign forces even though their task is over, President Mubarak pointed out that the task is not yet over because an ultimate peace has not been reached and problems still exist. He stressed that as soon as all these problems are settled, we will demand the withdrawal of the foreign forces.

AL-AHRAM Criticizes UN Cease-Fire Resolution

NC3003234091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2235 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—In a commentary in its Sunday edition, AL-AHRAM criticizes the UN Security Council's draft resolution on a formal cease-fire between Iraq and the coalition countries for concentrating on the disarmament of Iraq, including the elimination of its chemical weapons, its surface-to-surface missiles, and any materials that can be used in the production of nuclear weapons.

The paper says: We are clearly against the Iraqi regime, whose foolishness and the ignorance of its leaders caused the disaster of the occupation of Kuwait and the subsequent war that destroyed both countries. However, on the basis of the responsible position of leadership that

Egypt occupies for all of the Arab people, including the Iraqi people, we think that the Security Council's draft resolution indicates the removal of any Iraqi capability to defend itself.

The paper notes that it is not in the interest of the Arab states, including the Gulf states, for Iraq to become vulnerable and impotent. The paper affirms that what is logical and in the interest of the security of the Gulf states and the Arab national security is for Iraq to maintain a capability to defend itself against any geographically neighboring state.

AL-AHRAM asks at the conclusion of its commentary: If the present Iraqi regime falls after the implementation of the referent Security Council resolution, will the Iraqi people, their new leaders, and the security of the region continue to suffer the heavy burden of Saddam's regime?

U.S. Conditions on Iraq Strengthen Israel

NC2903130491 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 24 Mar 91 p 6

["Close-Up" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "In Whose Interest?"]

[Text] I believe it is in the interest of the Arab countries that participated in the alliance for the liberation of Kuwait to ask themselves who has a real interest in the new resolution that America and Britain are persistently trying to make the Security Council pass. This resolution compels Iraq to destroy its missile systems and mass destruction weapons—chemical and nuclear weapons—within 90 days as a condition for lifting economic sanctions.

U.S. military statements made during the intense air attacks by U.S. aircraft against Iraq say that they destroyed a high percentage—estimated at more than 70 percent—of Iraq's nuclear and chemical weapons. Iraqi forces could not, in the moments of despair and retreat use any of these weapons, the danger of which U.S. and Israeli media magnified. U.S. and Israeli media added that these weapons were actually deployed at the Iraqi forces frontlines. It became clear that all this was part of the psychological warfare intended to crush Iraq.

This means that the chemical and nuclear potential remaining in Iraq do not represent a real danger. The American and British objective goes beyond disarming the Iraqi monster and depriving it of the means of power. The objective is to remove mass destruction weapons from the region in implementation of the American plan announced by Bush; namely, the removal of mass destruction weapons from the Middle East.

The urgent and direct result of this is that Israel will be the only country in the region to preserve its missile and antimissile missiles, in addition to the Patriot missiles it received during the war and the sophisticated chemical and nuclear weapons it possesses. Until President Bush succeeds in his objective of removing mass destruction weapons from the Middle East and in implementing this with regard to Israel, many things will have happened. And there is no sure guarantee that he will succeed.

The indirect results will be an increase in the imbalance of power in the region and Israel will be able to achieve a significant superiority in the size and level of armament so that it will intensify its intransigence, its rigid position, and its disregard for any efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Thus, it seems that the new conditions they want to impose on Iraq will serve only one objective; namely, strengthening Israel militarily and economically. But, saying that the objective of this is to secure the Gulf from Iraq's threats is unacceptable deception, because Iraq—as a state—is actually finished. This was reaffirmed by [Iraq's] UN representative, who said that the destruction inflicted on Iraq has taken it back to the Middle Ages.

MENA Reports Agreement With World Bank

NC2803201691 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1600 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 28 Mar (MENA)—Two months of intensive top-level talks have culminated in an agreement between Egypt and the World Bank on the terms of a proposed economic restructuring loan.

The terms of the agreement were defined in the memorandum signed for Egypt by Dr. Maurice Makramallah, state minister for international cooperation, and for the bank by Dr. William Taylor and Dr. Spiros Fudydris [name as received].

The weekly English language edition of AL-AHRAM said today the memorandum sets the terms of the loan for the restructuring program and the government's plan for economic reform.

The program gives the necessary steps needed for reform in five key areas, the first addressing an overhaul of the public sector whereby the government states its intention to formulate a new public investment law to replace Law No. 97.

The articles of the draft law have not been disclosed yet, but one is known to stipulate the abolishment of the system of an approved foreign exchange rate and the budgets of public sector companies.

As for the overhaul of public corporations, the Egyptian Government has declared its intention to review the Central Bank's supervisory system and its organization of commercial banks.

In an appendix to the memorandum, the government stressed its commitment to a reworking of Law No. 97 governing public sector companies.

The AL-AHRAM report said the focus of the reform program is to free prices, particularly the prices of energy

for agricultural uses on which [word indistinct] concerning the strategic restructuring.

On energy pricing, the government decided to create an additional source of revenue worth 3.2 billion Egyptian pounds to supplement the budget to narrow the gap between the government-subsidized oil prices and world prices.

The freeing of oil prices is expected to be phased in over several years. A price increase will take effect next May bringing in revenue worth an annual 1.9 billion Egyptian pounds. The increase will be based on an energy price formula worked out with the World Bank in March 1990 made up of an above-average [mutawassit kabir] level of oil products.

The second step on energy pricing calls for a second rise by year's end with the object of reaching the target average increase of 56 percent of oil products on world markets.

The second increase is projected to add an annual 800 million pounds to the budget.

The anticipated revenue from increased prices of oil products worth 3.2 billion pounds will be supplemented by an emergency U.S. grant of 300 million pounds. This is to supplement the anticipated revenues from increasing the prices of oil products in fiscal 1991-92.

The AL-AHRAM WEEKLY report said the electricity prices will go up during the first week of next May to an average 50 percent of the long-term marginal cost of electricity, which would add at least 800 million pounds to the budget and bring the prices of energy and electricity products closer to their real costs.

The report went on to say that the second clause on the policy of freeing of prices concerns agricultural pricing, especially the cotton sold by farmers to the government on the basis of the procurement system [nizam al-tawrid]. This policy is to be overhauled—a major point of argument between the government and the World Bank.

However, the government has announced its intention to free the terms of producing and pricing cotton while retaining the procurement system.

The amendments to the prices under the procurement system are expected to bring the price of cotton to 60 percent of world prices. Cotton prices are to rise gradually to 66 percent next year.

The rise of the price of the cotton sold to the government at 60 percent of world prices will take effect this year. The difference will be made up by reducing subsidies to insecticides and cotton fertilizer by 50 percent by 1992.

Thereafter, government subsidies of insecticides and cotton fertilizer will be completely scrapped in 1993.

The AL-AHRAM WEEKLY said the third area of overhauling the pricing policy concerns the quasi-government freight and public transport companies. The government indicated that these companies will be free to liberalize their prices with the enforcement of the new public investment law.

Concerning the fourth area of reform, the memorandum was not specific but touched on matters of commerical policies. In this respect, the government emphasized that it will affect tariff reform and (?other) trade policies before the World Bank board convenes on 18 June 1991. The government has also pledged itself to a reform of the foreign currency allocations and the system of the public sector's budgets.

The final clause of the economic restructuring loan addresses the private sector, with the government agreeing to draft a law giving this sector's companies the right of direct hiring and creating job opportunities.

The report went on to say that after agreement had been reached on the economic terms as outlined in the memorandum, the government and the World Bank agreed to work out special arrangements to ensure strict overseeing of the loan. A ministerial reform committee chaired by the prime minister and including several, if not all, of the ministers of the economic group is expected to take charge of this task. Also a committee made up of senior officials will be formed to help the ministerial committee carry out the reform projects. Further, there will be a technical secretariat composed of economists and experienced administrators to help these two committees fulfill their missions.

An International Bank team of experts is scheduled to visit Egypt from 6 to 11 April to discuss arrangements for the use of financial allocations of the restructuring loan.

The report said that despite the scale of the proposed economic reforms as outlined in the memorandum on the framework of comprehensive medium-term economic action, it has yet to be finalized.

This is expected to be completed following the current talks between the government and the IMF.

The AL-AHRAM WEEKLY report said the final agreement with the World Bank worked out on the basis of the terms outlined in the memorandum are awaiting a resolution of pending issues mainly to do with the exchange rate used in determining the prices of the procurement of cotton and the framework of medium-term economic reform.

Need To Solve Palestinian Issue Discussed

NC1903112591 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 13 Mar 91 p 1

[Ibrahim Nafi' article "Israel's Saddam"]

[Text] The United States has a historic opportunity to prove the credibility of the principles of the new world

order on the basis of which it led the battle for the liberation of Kuwait from Saddam's occupation, if it now leads another political battle "to liberate" the Palestinian people's rights from the Israeli occupation.

The United States mobilized the whole world against Saddam's Iraq, which violated international legitimacy and occupied a small Arab country. The Security Council issued 12 resolutions against Iraq and, on the basis of which, the international community, led by America, waged the battle to liberate Kuwait, and achieved by force and imposed on Iraq respect for international legitimacy.

It now remains for the international community to go ahead with the same might into the Palestinian arena to impose the international legitimacy based on the UN resolutions on Israel, and to force it to respect this community's will, and return the usurped rights to their owners. For there is yet another "Saddam," in Israel, who violates international legitimacy, rejects the appeals of right, justice, and peace, and holds onto false historical claims to usurp the rights of others.

He took the opportunity of the world's preoccupation with the Gulf crisis and pounced on the Palestinian people's intifadah, and imprisoned more than 1.7 million Palestinians in their homes throughout the war. He now continues his flagrant prevarications to waste all opportunities for peace and stability in the region. He has prepared to confront the stage in which the eyes of the world will be automatically riveted to the occupied Arab land following the end of the Kuwait war, with increased intransigence and obduracy.

When U.S. President Bush stated that the time had come to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict, deceptive Israeli statements came out anew in an attempt to dilute and empty the U.S. statement of its substance. The statements indicated that Israel agrees with Bush's statement on the need to settle the conflict, but does not know how this can be brought about. And an Israeli official came out to say that Israel may accept a regional but not an international conference to settle the conflict.

We are not concerned with Israel's false bewilderment nor with the form of the conference called to settle this conflict. What basically concerns us is that Israel affirm the following basic and important principles:

The climate is now prepared more than ever before to put an end to this conflict and defuse the continuing instability in the region.

If the international community and the new world order are really and genuinely working to entrench peace and stability in the vital region of the Middle East, there is no way this can be achieved without solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel's recognizing the Palestinian people's right to establish their independent state in any form the Palestinians themselves decide.

The continued hotbed of the Arab-Israeli conflict will continue to spawn throughout the ages new profiteers using the Palestinian issue as a cover to achieve their greed and expansionist ambitions, as Saddam Husayn did. If you do not want a new Saddam to emerge, you have to return rights to their owners.

All of Israel's claims about the security theory that depends on a long and strong arm and secure borders and continuing to rely on them to maintain its arrogance and haughtiness and refusal to recognize rights have collapsed in the Gulf war. Missiles can reach Israel from anywhere however "secure" its borders are, and a strong arm can be crushed if it persists in its arrogant defiance [Mukabarah] and usurpation of rights, as happened to the Iraqi arm. As for the only secure borders, they are the just borders recognized by all parties and not the ones imposed by the logic of force. Therefore, Israel will not enjoy real peace whatever it does unless it returns the Palestinian people's rights and withdraws from the occupied Arab land, with everyone recognizing the right of each state to live safe and secure within its borders. Israel, therefore, must live within its borders, declare these borders, and that it will not encroach on its neighbors' territory.

The Palestinians have accepted the UN resolutions and agreed to recognize Israel and its right to exist. This, however, resulted only in a brief dialogue with the United States that soon stopped. The Palestinians cannot be required to do more and all demands must be directed to Israel and to Israel's Saddam, Yitzhaq Shamir. The United States and the international community should give full support for the Arab rights in confronting Israel's arrogance and intransigence with the same insistence they confronted Saddam's arrogance and intransigence. International interests are more enduring than the regional ambitions of any country. International interests require the achievement of true stability in the Middle East, which will not materialize while Israel refuses to return the Arab and Palestinian rights.

What Shamir and Israel do not realize now is that there are no permanent alliances or enmities, but policies and interests. The international interests and the new world order require stability and security in the Middle East. If Israel fails to realize the realities of the age, the new order cannot achieve its principles in a region with unsettled conflicts that could generate more and more radical movements and more profiteers and adventurers playing with the peoples' interests and stability.

It is not fair that the Arab region's peoples should bear all these sacrifices while the new world order fails in its new "test" with Israel after having marshaled armies and conducted the Kuwait test successfully just because Israel still adheres to worn-out claims whose falsity we have repeatedly proved, and which the Kuwait war practically proved to be false and unsound.

Bahrain

Amir Receives Mubarak Message on Postwar Situation

NC3003110191 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0910 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpt] 30 Mar (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah, Bahrain's amir, has recieved a message from Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The message deals with relations and ways of consolidating them and the Arab situation after the Gulf war and the liberation of Kuwait.

Dr. 'Atif 'Ubayd, Egyptian minister of cabinet affairs and state minister for administrative development, conveyed the message to the amir this morning during a meeting in Manama that was also attended by the Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah. [passage ommitted]

Egyptian Minister Departs

NC3103183791 Manama WAKH in English 1619 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Manama, March 31 (GNA)—The Egyptian minister for cabinet affairs and minister of state for administrative development Dr 'Atif 'Ubayd left for Cairo this afternoon after a two-day visit to Bahrain where he conveyed a message to H.M. the Amir Shaykh 'Isa Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah from Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on prospects of enhancing bilateral relations and the latest Gulf and Arab developments as well as issues of mutual interest.

He also held talks on administrative development cooperation between the two countries. [passage omitted]

Reportage on Visit of Somali Prime Minister

Arrives for Talks 30 Mar

NC3003105891 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0945 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Manama, 30 Mar (WAKH)—Omar Arteh Ghalib, prime minister of the Somali provisional government, and his delegation arrived here today from Doha on a two-day visit to Bahrain. Ghalib will hold talks with Bahraini officials on relations and ways of consolidating them, current developments in Somalia in light of recent events, Arab and African issues, and subjects of common interest between the two countries. [passage omitted]

Talks With Amir

NC3003112591 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1100 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Manama, 30 Mar (WAKH)—Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah and Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah received here today Omar Arteh Ghalib, prime minister of the Somali provisional government, and his delegation. They reviewed economic and trade relations between the two countries and the means to promote them. They also discussed the latest developments in the region. [passage omitted]

Talks Focus on Trade, Postwar Situation

NC3103113191 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1040 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Manama, 31 Mar (WAKH)—Official talks were held in Manama today between Bahrain, led by Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah, and Somalia, led by Omar Arteh Ghalib, prime minister of the provisional government.

WAKH has learned that the talks reviewed trade and economic cooperation, ways to bolster investments and establish development projects, and the situation in the Arab world after the liberation of Kuwait. The agency also learned that the two sides exchanged views on their view of the future of Afro-Arab cooperation to bring about stability and development. [passage omitted]

Ghalib Leaves for Oman 31 Mar

NC3103140791 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1340 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Manam, 31 Mar (WAKH)—Omar Arteh Ghalib, prime minister of the provisional government of Somalia, left Manama for Muscat after a two-day visit to Bahrain. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

New Government To Be Announced in 'a Few Days'

LD0104115291 London KUNA in Arabic 1030 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Text] London, 1 Apr (KUNA)—His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti crown prince and prime minister, stated in a press interview issued here today that the formation of the Kuwaiti Government would be announced in a few days following the consultations held these past days with Kuwaiti officials and prominent figures. In an interview with the newspaper 'AL HAYAT,' his highness indicated that numerous responsibilities and burdens lay ahead of the government and he expressed great hope "to overcome the crisis with the cooperation of the Kuwaitis".

Regarding the stand of the Kuwaiti Government on the Palestinians, especially those whose collaboration with the Iraqi troops during the occupation is proven, Shaykh Sa'd said: "Many people have spread several rumors on this subject with a view to creating a tense atmosphere between Kuwaitis and Palestinians. We have already denied these totally untrue rumors and I renew the denial a second and third time. But if it is established

that some Palestinian or non-Palestinian elements helped the Iraqi soldiers during their presence in Kuwait, we will interrogate them about this matter. Anyone found guilty will be referred to the courts so that the judiciary can decide on their case".

With regard to the date of parliamentary elections in Kuwait, his highness said: "the date of the elections has not been fixed yet and His Highness the Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad will issue an edict on this matter".

Concerning the return of Kuwaiti nationals to their country, Shaykh Sa'd said that the Interior Ministry was studying the subject and was preparing a comprehensive census of Kuwaitis who are abroad, that return cards would be issued to them, and that their return was expected to start after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

Heir Apparent on Trials for Palestinians, Elections

NC2903220691 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2000 GMT 29 Mar 91

['Abdallah al-Shihri dispatch from Kuwait on interview with Kuwaiti Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah—recorded]

[Text] Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister, said that consultations are continuing in the formation of a new Kuwaiti Government that will be able to surmount the current crisis and extend services to the Kuwaiti citizens. Shaykh Sa'd did not set a date for the formation of the new government but some informed sources here expect that this will take place next week. Shaykh Sa'd, who had earlier met with Saudi Staff Lieutenant General Khalid Bin-Sultan, commander of the joint forces, was interviewed by our radio. During the interview, he said that the Kuwaitis who are now residing abroad will begin returning home after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

In response to a question about reports concerning the mistreatment of Palestinians in Kuwait, Shaykh Sa'd told our radio:

[Begin recording] [al-Sabah] Some people have spread numerous rumors with the aim of creating a tense climate between Kuwaitis and Palestinians. We have already denied these rumors as groundless. I am now repeating the denial for the third, fourth, and fifth times. Certainly if it is proved that some Palestinian or non-Palestinian individuals helped the Iraqi troops during their presence in Kuwait, these individuals will be interrogated and put on trial so that the courts can decide the case of anyone who is found to have assisted Iraqi troops either directly or indirectly.

[Al-Shihri] Your Highness, a Palestinian official has stated that the Kuwaiti Government has not yet responded to the request to reopen the Palestinian Embassy. What is the significance of this and what is the significance of the recall of your ambassadors to Jordan, Yemen, Mauritania, Tunisia, and Algeria?

[Al-Sabah] I do not really wish to answer this question in full detail. Nevertheless, requests submitted by countries that supported the Iraqi aggression are being studied by the foreign minister. He will submit a report on this matter in the next few days.

[Al-Shihri] Your Highness, do you believe that your government is sticking to its position that parliamentary elections will be held in the next six months or the next year? When will election lists be drawn up?

[Al-Sabah] Again, I do not wish to answer this question in a clear and detailed manner. As to setting the date for the elections, this will be done by his highness the amir, may God preserve him. [end recording]

Shaykh Sa'd also said that weapons Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis are holding illegitimately will have to be registered soon.

In his talks with Lt. Gen. Khalid, the Kuwaiti heir apparent said that they revolved on military and security cooperation between Saudi Arabia in a way that will serve the good of the two countries, and consequently, the good the countries of the region.

We note in conclusion that Lt. Gen. Khalid also met this evening with His Highness Amir of Kuwait Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad. Shaykh Salim al-'Ali, commander of the National Guard; Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and Shaykh Nawwaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah, minister of defense also attended the meeting.

Iraq Urged To Release Remaining Kuwaiti Prisoners

LD2903183491 London KUNA in Arabic 1801 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Excerpt] Kuwait, 29 Mar (KUNA)—The State of Kuwait urges the Iraqi authorities to release the remaining Kuwaiti prisoners still in Iraqi detention centers. 'Abd al-'Aziz Dukhayl al-Dukhayl, the undersecretary of the Justice Ministry and chairman of the Kuwaiti Committee for Human Rights [KCHR], asserted in a news statement here today that a number of prisoners are still being detained by the Iraqi authorities. Those who have been released so far do not include all the names listed by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The KCHR chairman added that there are a number of urgent measures which have been taken to assert the number of prisoners and detainees still in Iraqi hands in a bid to guarantee their speedy release and their return to their families. [passage omitted]

Figures Given on Kuwaitis Returned From Iraq

LD3103134391 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1300 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the governor of al-Farwaniyah and coordinator of the Kuwaiti POW's Affairs Committee, said that 5,830 Kuwaiti prisoners of various military ranks and civilians have been received so far.

He added that thousands of prisoners are still being detained by the Iraqi regime. In a statement today to the Saudi paper AL-RIYADH, he said that 12 April has been set for announcing the names of some more missing Kuwaitis and the date and venue for their reception.

Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahmad al-Sabah said that a number of Kuwaiti civilians and military citizens of various ranks, children, women, elderly, and whole families are still being held inside Iraq in positions on which we have some information. These have not been received yet. He indicated that lists of names of those missing have been submitted to the International Committee of the Red Cross 10 days ago and again during the meeting that was held in Riyadh yesterday.

'Arafat Urged To Give Up PLO Leadership

LD3003142891 London KUNA in Arabic 1350 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Text] Jeddah, 30 Mar (KUNA)—The Kuwaiti paper AL-SIYASSAH today called on Yasir 'Arafat to give up the PLO leadership "to put the Palestinian cause in the hands of a new leadership which will bear the weight of the Palestinian process in the forthcoming stage." The newspaper based its opinion on the fact that the present Palestinian leadership headed by Yasir 'Arafat "does not seem acceptable to the international community, which means that this leadership must step down in the interest of the Palestinian cause." In its editorial, the paper indicated that the world had turned its back to 'Arafat after he lost his credibility and started jumping from one position to another and "after he began interfering in matters that concerned him and matters that did not. Whenever there is a crisis here and there, he immediately becomes its sponsor and theoretician." The paper also expressed the belief that, because of such behavior, the liberation organizations "lost all their territories and all their bases, thus becoming a caravan moving from one country to another every year." AL-SIYASSAH added: "We do not know why 'Arafat insists on remaining at the head of the organization." It went on to say that 'Arafat must realize now that the interest of the cause makes it necessary for him to go unless the cause is, in his opinion, a Trojan horse he can climb on to win the political races he wants to win."

Oman

Somali Prime Minister Arrives in Muscat 31 Mar

NC3103160491 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1523 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Muscat, 31 Mar (WAKH)—Somali Prime Minister Omar Orteh Ghalib arrived in Muscat this evening on a three-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman, during which he will hold talks with senior officials.

Upon his arrival the Somali prime minister was received by Qays Ben-'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Zawawi, deputy prime minister for financial and economic affairs, and other senior officials.

Qatar

Somali Prime Minister Departs After Talks 30 Mar

NC3003105991 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0905 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Doha, 30 Mar (WAKH)—Omar Arteh Ghalib, prime minister of the Somali provisional government, left Doha today after a four-day visit to Qatar as part of his tour of the region. During the visit, he held talks with senior Qatari officials on developments in Somalia, bilateral relations, and current Arab issues.

Saudi Arabia

Commander Denies Statement on Foreign Forces

LD3003213791 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2100 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Riyadh, 30 Mar (SPA)—His Royal Highness Staff Lieutenant General Khalid Bin-Sultan-Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the commander of the joint forces, denied the statements attributed to him by Radio Monte Carlo on Wednesday 27 March to the effect that he welcomes the permanent presence of foreign forces in the Gulf region.

In a statement to SPA, he pointed out that that was not what he said and mentioned that there is a distortion in what is attributed to him.

Iranian Envoy Arrives in Riyadh To Reopen Embassy

LD3103122191 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] An Iranian delegation, led by Ambassdor Mostafa Fumani, director of the Arab Peninsula affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, arrived in Riyadh yesterday to reopen the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Riyadh following the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The delegation was welcomed upon arrival at King Khalid International Airport by Ambassador Muhammad (?al-Fas) and a number of officials from the Foreign Ministry.

United Arab Emirates

Somali Prime Minister Leaves for Doha After Talks

NC2703153391 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0940 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 27 Mar (WAKH)—Omar Arteh, prime minister of the provisional government in Somalia, left Abu Dhabi for Doha this morning as part of a tour in a number of the region's states.

During his visit to the United Arab Emirates [UAE], Arteh met with His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, UAE president, and senior UAE officials. During his meetings with them, the Somali prime minister reviewed the current situation in Somalia, Arab developments, and bilateral ties.

President Orders Release of 157 Prisoners

NC3103223291 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2050 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 31 Mar (WAKH)—In his capacity as governor of Abu Dhabi, His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], ordered the release of 157 prisoners who served half of their sentence. The release applies to those who were imprisoned for noncriminal cases [ghayr jina'iyah].

This decision was made in observance of the holy month of Ramadan.

Hammadi Gives Government Policy Statement 30 Mar

NC3003191591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1830 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—Sa'dun Hammadi, prime minister and Revolution Command Council member, has expressed his confidence that Iraq will transcend the stage it is passing through into a more advanced stage in all domains.

In a speech he made on Iraqi television this evening, Hammadi asserted to the citizens and sons of the people of Iraq that Iraq will remain united and independent, enjoying free will, security, and stability. He also said that Iraq's economy will flourish and develop, and that a life of law and democracy will return.

Sa'dun Hammadi added that we are welcoming a new stage of building, construction, and democratic progress that is more advanced than our past stages.

He pointed out that the aggression that took place against our country inflicted material damage that cannot be underestimated. Afterwards, the agents of foreigners came and committed national high treason when they stabbed their country in the back.

The prime minister said that we have a great construction mission that we should accomplish with our own resources, which are limited because of the economic siege. He noted, however, that whatever the magnitude of the mission, we will undertake it and we will compensate for the shortage of resources by our great resolve, hard work, and national enthusiasm.

Sa'dun Hammadi said: The present government will contribute to the completion of building the democratic institutions in the various spheres, particularly in the sphere of the basic elements on which our political system is based—namely, the Constitution, party life, the information media, and the public cultural institutions.

The prime minister said that Iraq will be a contributor to the general security, stability, and tranquility in the region and a sincere defender of the pan-Arab goals of the Arab nation.

The text of the speech of the Revolution Command Council member and the prime minister follows:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate:

Brother citizens, I extend to you my best greetings and warmly congratulate you on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, which is deeply entrenched in our spiritual heritage. I wish you the best of what you wish for, and I hope that your days will be full of goodness, success, and happiness. I pray that God protects you, guides your steps, and bestows on you blessings, peace, and reassurance.

Brother citizens, as indicated in the speech of the leader president on 30 Sha'ban, 1411 Hegira, corresponding to 16 March, we are embarking on a new stage in which we have decided to be a state of construction and development, in a stage of democratic progress more advanced than previous ones. The aims of the aggression which took place against our country are known to you and to all the Arabs and Muslims. The aims were to once again impose the hegemony of the imperialist states on this region, particularly on the sources of the oil wealth, end the Palestinian issue in a manner consistent with the Zionist aims, and consolidate the old regimes that are linked with the Western imperialist policy.

Irrespective of the different interpretations and views, the essence of the matter remains that the cause of the aggression was Iraq's resistance to all this. The importance of what Iraq has done in this respect will become clear sooner or later. The citizen in Iraq and the Arab homeland and the free Muslims and free people in the world will see that Iraq has paid a price for a just cause and a noble aim—namely, resisting imperialism, Zionism, and the old system. A just struggle for this cause or any other serious cause is not expected to be without a price.

The aggression has caused considerable damage to us. The agents of the foreigners then committed high treason, stabbing their country in the back at a critical time and inflicting on the country material and moral damage not less than the damage caused by the aggression itself. The magnitude of what those saboteur traitors have done has become known to a large extent and is there before your eyes. If it indicates anything, it indicates treason and primitive behavior, and it also shows that they do not hesitate to collaborate with the foreigners against the homeland.

Now that the sectarian sedition has breathed its last breath and after its perpetrators and those behind them from outside the borders have been crowned with shame, the door has opened for the stage of reconstruction and reform.

The outcome of the first sabotage [al-takhrib] and the second sabotage places on our shoulders a great reconstruction mission that we must carry out with our indigenous resources, which are limited because of the current economic blockade. But, whatever the magnitude of the mission, we will undertake it and we will compensate for the shortage of resources by our great resolve, hard work, and national enthusiasm. Man's capacity to work, create, and overcome difficulties is much greater than what appears at first sight, provided that determination and high morale are available. In addition to this, the Iraqi people are known for being astute, proud, and enthusiastic.

I am confident that we can do this work. Repairing the damage, providing the services which are suffering from shortages, food, and the basic necessities for all the citizens is our primary task. All of us must undertake it with contentment, resolution, enthusiasm, and organized plans which deal with all things, from minor to major ones, according to priorities, with minimum costs, and with our intrinsic efforts as much as possible.

What each one of us is required to do is to work and achieve as much as possible, or at least to do the minimum that can be done. On this road, we must not dispense with anything or any person.

Since the early 1980's, the revolutionary government approved in principle a substantive change toward democracy in the political structure and moving the country from the phase of revolutionary establishments to the phase of constitutional establishments. The war prevented this from taking place. After the war ended, important steps were made in the fields of discussion, decisionmaking, and formulating laws. The new Constitution was drafted and draft laws for parties and press were formulated. Again the process was postponed because of aggression.

Within its constitutional powers, the current government will contribute toward carrying out this task in all domains in order to complete our democratic institutions in various fields, particularly in the field of basic affairs on which our political system is based; namely, the Constitution, party life, the media, and the public culture establishments.

It is a big and essential task which we will carry out stemming from our sincerity to the principles which we declared to the people on various occasions especially the leader president's recent speech on 16 March.

The government's contribution to this important national task will require substantial efforts in both our thinking and action which we will undertake with the same level of perseverance and willpower in order to develop our political system on a correct democratic basis.

Democracy is an integrated system. Therefore, in organizing relationships, democracy is not confined to the top echelon of the state but extends to all institutions from top to bottom. Within the government's constitutional authority, efforts will be made to take all possible and practical steps in this regard so that the democratic reform process in all the state institutions will start gradually and in accordance with the country's circumstances.

Perhaps one of the most important pillars on which democracy in the new phase is based is the establishment of the supremacy of the law, making it the sole regulator of relations in the various domains, whether between the authority and the citizen, among the citizens themselves, or among the various state establishments. The power of the law is supreme. Only the law can prevail. Implementing the law is the task of competent state organs and respecting the law is the duty of everyone and on all levels.

Law regulates rights and duties, settles disputes , and defines a citizen's relationship with the state's organs. Security and order are the state's main task. It is the main reason for which the state was established. Therefore, the government will make the utmost efforts to establish order and preserve security throughout the country in a neutral, equal, and fair way for all, especially after the disturbance of security, violation of order, and transgression on the law perpetrated by a misled group which cooperated with the foreigners.

Brothers and sisters, our current economic circumstances, which are known to you, are difficult. However, you know that Iraq is rich with resources and manpower. Under theses circumstances we have to mobilize these resources to the maximum and (?activate) [words indistinct] in the socialist and private sectors. In this respect, we will work to achieve the utmost possible as resources and circumstances permit in order to get the socialist sector in various fields to resume its operations in production, services, distribution, and financing. We will use incentives, seeking efficacy and simple applications.

We attach due importance to the private and mixed sectors. We will offer the best facilities possible to both sectors within the framework of the state's general policy and within its means, particularly by freeing this activity of the administrative and legal restrictions that hamper its increased activity. We believe that further openness and elimination of restrictions and more facilities to the private and mixed sectors are necessary under these circumstances. We will work to secure this in the most varied fields possible. I would like to note here the importance we attach to the banks' resumption of normal work, lifting restrictions and ensuring the necessary means to normalize financial transactions.

The importance of the agricultural sector in these circumstances needs no further clarification because of the connection between this sector and food security for the citizens and the supply of raw materials to industry. The price subsidy policy will continue and will be a permanent, not a temporary, national policy. It will be developed in a manner that will be consistent with the purpose for which it was established; namely, to provide profitable incentives to increase production, improve quality, and introduce new products. In the agricultural sector, we will work to provide the maximum agricultural requirements under the present circumstances, particularly fuel, seeds, insecticides, and machines. However, these efforts must be supplemented by efforts made by the producers and farmers.

Increasing production is our principal aim, and reward and punishment will take place on this basis. We look to a good agricultural season in terms of grain. It is no secret to anyone that this is a national economic mission. It is an important indicator of true patriotism.

Brothers, for not a short time we have been suffering from a problem in the administration of the government. This problem has several negative aspects, which, all combined, have led to a weakness in performance. This had led to a squandering of financial resources and to an undemocratic relationship with the citizens because of complex procedures and bureaucracy. The reform of government administration is complicated and not an easy matter, but it is necessary for humanitarian and economic reasons.

We cannot tolerate the waste of (?efforts) and resources. We also cannot tolerate the hardship faced by [words indistinct] in dealing with the state departments. Irrespective of how complex and how long it will take, the task of administrative reform must begin in a decisive manner, on the one hand, and in a scientific manner, on the other. This task must not be underestimated. It will have an important impact on the efforts for development and building the new democratic life.

In the field of public services, our aim is making the most effort to restore the services experiencing shortages as quickly as possible, particularly in the fields of fuel, communications, electric power, and potable water. We are also paying maximum attention to the citizens' living conditions by improving the supply of rationed foodstuff—that is, by increasing their quantity—and by working to provide as much other goods as possible. Improving all aspects of the living conditions of the low income groups will be at the top of our priorities, whether through providing work, improving income, or regulating prices.

Sisters and brothers. In such critical circumstances which are charged with emotion, our national duty and the noble principles we are fighting for make it incumbent on us to remain devoted to all that is right and just and to let the word of justice be our guide. This requires us to overcome several misleading factors, especially the media disinformation that the enemy engages in and the views and stands that are stirred by emotions and primitive instincts. The bright fact is that the leadership of the revolution has struggled sincerely and with self-denial for noble principles and the national and pan-Arab objectives. It now stands proud of its sincere struggle and dedication to the people's cause. Patriotic strugglers in Iraq and in the Arab homeland and the free men of the world are well aware of this. At the pinnacle of this leadership is President Saddam Husayn, the honest struggler who stands firm for the sake of principles. He has given this leadership courage, dedication, and cohesion with the people. He is known to be so.

We are confident that we will overcome this stage and move on to one that is more advanced in all fields. Iraq will remain united, independent, and free, enjoying security and stability. Its economy will prosper and progress. The life of the law and democracy will return. It will be an important contributor to security, stability, and tranquility in the region. It will be a sincere defender of the national objectives of the Arab nation.

May God grant you success, bless your month, crown your efforts with success, and grant you strength and the will to do good in order to achieve these noble tasks. May almighty God's peace, mercy, and blessings be with you.

Memo to UN Details U.S. 'Provocative Acts'

NC3003021491 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 2247 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] New York, 29 Mar (INA)—Iraq's permanent representative at the United Nations has addressed a memorandum to the president of the UN Security Council and the UN secretary general. The memorandum is about the massive destruction of Iraq's civilian facilities and infrastructure caused by the United States and its allies during the military operations beginning the night of 16-17 January and continuing until 28 February.

In the memorandum, reported by an INA correspondent in New York, the representative said the enormous destruction highlighted the United States' brutal nature and its illegal use of international legitimacy and Security Council resolutions to destroy an entire people.

Following is the text of the memorandum:

Your Excellency: Upon the instructions of my government, I have the honor to inform you that the massive destruction caused by the United States and its allies of Iraq's civilian facilities and infrastructure during the military operations from 16-17 January 1991 to 28 February 1991 has highlighted the United States' brutal nature and its illegal use of international legitimacy and the Security Council resolutions to destroy an entire people.

The United States was not satisfied to drop more than 90,000 tonnes of bombs during more than 100,000 air raids on Iraqi cities and facilities. After the fighting ceased, and under the pretext of conducting surveillance, U.S. planes continued to fly intensively in Iraqi airspace, shoot down unarmed aircraft, destroy tanks, land airborne forces on roads inside Iraq, and intercept Iraqi helicopters on civilian missions and transporting civilan employees, political figures, and relief delegations inside Iraq after the military operations had destroyed and disrupted most land transport systems in the country.

Following are the details of these provocative acts:

Date	Details
5 March	17 sorties over Baghdad and the area west of it.
6 March	Five sorties over the area between al-Nasiriyah and al-Kut.
8 March	Two sorties over the area between al-Ramadi and Tikrit.
9 March	Two sorties over the area east of Baghdad and al-Nasiriyah
10 March	Nine sorties over Hadithah, north of Ramadi, south of Baghdad, and north of al-Kut
11 March	Seven sorties mainly over the southern area between al-Nasiriyah and south of Baghdad. A formation reached the Madali area and another formation reached al-Ramadi.
12 March	Nine sorties mainly over the city of Baghdad and between the cities of al-Kut and al-Nasiriyah.
13 March	One sortie mainly between south of al-Kut and al-Diwaniyah.

14 March	One sortie in the area of western al-'Amarah, then toward the city of al-Kut, and then in the al-Samawah area.
16 March	100 formations consisting of 192 planes carried out sorties over the city of Baghdad, the Mandali area, the east of Tikri, the city of al-Kut, Karbala' and the Kilo-160 area.
17 March	162 sorties through 107 formations over the the areas of al-Nakhib [as received], al-Kut, the Kilo-160, al-Nasiriyah, al-Samawah, al-Diwaniyah, Tikrit, Mandali, al-Najaf, and Karkuk. The sound barrier was broken over the city of Karkuk.
18 March	67 formations consisting of 148 aircraft mainly overflew the western area of al-Razzazah, between al-Hayy and al-Kut, the southwest of Khanaqin, the Kilo-160, al-Rutbah, al-Qadisiyah, al-Najaf, al-Tharthar, Karbala', Karkuk, and al-Ramadi.
19 March	208 sorties were carried out by 108 formations mainly over the al-Ramadi area, the east of al-Nakhib, Samarra', al-Kut, al-Hashimiyah, several times over Baghdad, (Manzili), (al-Jawwaniyah), al-Nasiriyah, and Karkuk.
20 March	288 sorties by 143 formations mainly over the area of al-Miqdadiyah, al-Suwayrah, Kuwait, al-Razzazah, Samarra', Baghdad.
23 March	171 sorties by 81 formations mainly over the areas of southern Baghdad, al-Qadisiyah, eastern Baghdad, al-Habbaniyah, al-Ramadi, Tikrit, Kuwait, Karbala', Khanaqin, and al-Najaf. The altitude ranged between three and 7.5 km and they flew at a speed of 720 km per hour. In addition, the U.S. Air Force downed SCP [as received] aircraft in the northern area.
24 March	124 sorties were flown by 62 formations mainly over the cities of Baghdad, al-Kut, and al-Razzazah. The altitude ranged from between seven and eight km and at a speed of 750 km per hour.
25 March	128 sorties were flown by 65 formations. The altitude ranged from between two and nine km and at a speed of 800 km per hour. The planes were identified as F-14's and F-15's. The flights were mainly in the areas south of Baghdad, north of Baghdad, and over Baghdad. The sorties were intended for reconnaissance and provocations. The planes overflew Baghdad city several times.
26 March	126 sorties in 63 formations. The planes flew at an altitude of two to eight km at a speed of 800 km per hour. Participating planes were identified as F-15's and F-14's. The sorties were carried out over Baghdad, south of Baghdad, north of Baghdad, and the western region. The objective of the flights was surveillance and over the city of Baghdad.
27 March	167 sorties in 72 formations. The altitude ranged between six and 7.5 km, with the planes flying at a very low altitude at times. The planes' speed ranged from between 700 and 850 km per hour. The planes were identified as F-15's and F-14's. They flew mainly over Baghdad and to the west and (?east) of the city. The planes carried out observation, flying several times over Baghdad at a very low altitude.
28 March	102 sorties in 46 formations. Enemy F-14's, F-15's, and F-16's, and they flew mainly over Baghdad, al-Kut, al-Diwaniyah, south of Baghdad, and Kilo-160. The planes conducted observation, surveillance, and engaged in provocations as they flew over Baghdad several times.
29 March	97 sorties in 46 formations. The planes flew at an altitude of 3.5 to seven km at a speed of 600 to 720 km per hour. They were identified as F-15's, F-16's, and F-14's, and they were basically active over Baghdad, east of Baghdad, al-Tharthar, and Kilo-160. The aim was to carry out observations, surveillance, and provocation.

The continuation of these unjustified, hostile, and provocative acts day and night, and in the holy month of Ramadan, insults the sentiments of the Iraqi Muslims and all the Muslims in the world, disregards their religious beliefs, and disturbs the peace and safety of Iraqis in this blessed month.

We wonder about the motives behind these aerial sorties. Are they meant to tame [tarwid] the Iraqi air defenses with the intent to deal a treacherous blow, or are they merely provocations meant to insult Iraq and take revenge on its people? Do the UN Security Council resolutions provide for insulting the Iraqi people, for revenge against them, for disregarding their religious beliefs, and for disturbing and intimidating the Iraqis while they are fasting? Do the UN Security Council resolutions provide for terrorizing women and children and for disturbing the sick and depriving them of sleep at night and rest during the day?

In addition, I would like to say that the U.S. military forces committed the acts described below, which violate Iraq's sovereignty and its territorial integrity and exceed any so-called international legitimacy that is used as a pretext to occupy the land of Iraq:

1. On 12 March 1991 the U.S. forces entered the western sector of the city of al-Nasiriyah with armored vehicles, in response to mortar shelling directed at them by the saboteurs. The forces withdrew to their former positions after the population told them that the fire directed against them originated not from the army but from subversive elements.

2. On 15 March 1991 a U.S. force destroyed three tank carriers loaded with tanks on the al-Barjisiyah-al-Zubayr road. The U.S. forces searched the officers of the evacuation team and seized their light arms.

3. On 27 March 1991 the U.S. forces approached to a distance of one km from the high-speed traffic bridge leading to and from Wali al-Nasiriyah. Four U.S. helicopters stayed for about 15 minutes in the area, and there was information that the U.S. forces detained a number of soldiers.

4. On 28 March 1991 a U.S. tank company advanced to a distance of two km from the city of Suq al-Shaykh and took up positions near the city. A tank battalion also traveled on the highway toward the city of al-Nasiriyah.

5. On 20 March 1991 a plane of the alliance forces downed a Sukhoi-22 near the Air Force College in Tikrit.

We place these facts before the UN secretary general, the members of the UN Security Council, and all countries, nations, and organizations. We hope that the world understands the extent of the U.S. excessive use of unjustified force in departing from the UN Security Council resolution and in disregard of the sentiments of Muslims in this holy month.

You are kindly requested to circulate this message as a document of the UN Security Council. Please accept my great respect.

[Signed] The permanent delegate

[Copies for] The UN Security Council president, the UN secretary general

30 Mar Air Violation Cited

NC3103075191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0720 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] New York, 31 Mar (INA)—Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations has denounced the repeated violations of Iraqi airspace by U.S. and Saudi warplanes.

In a memorandum to the UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Iraq's representative said that among their blatant violations, U.S. warplanes carried out another violation over Baghadad at 2140 [1840 GMT] last night, firing flares over some Baghdad areas.

The Iraqi representative called for taking the necessary legal measures to halt such provocative acts, which constitute a premeditated threat to the cease-fire agreement and to Iraq's sovereignty. He demanded that the memorandum be distributed among the UN Security Council members and be filed as an official document.

Ibrahim Tours Karkuk, Meets Officials

NC2903193991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1830 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] Al-Ta'mim, 29 Mar (INA)—'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council and deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces, has underlined the need for a speedy restoration of electricity, water, and other essential services to the citizens of al-Ta'mim now that the governorate has been purged of the filth of the hooligans and the agents of Zionism.

During a meeting today Mr. Ibrahim informed al-Ta'mimn Governor Hashim Hasan al-Majid, the secretary of the al-Ta'mim branch of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and administrative governorate officials that all official business at all state departments would begin next Saturday.

Mr. Ibrahim ordered the formation of popular teams to clean the dear city of Karkuk and remove the bad aftermath of the gangs of looting and destruction, the humiliated traitors and followers of foreigners, in the city's streets and neighborhoods.

Mr. Ibrahim and the governor of al-Ta'mim toured the streets and neighborhoods of Karkuk, inspecting citizens and reassuring them about their economic conditions.

Cables Saddam on Karkuk 'Purging'

NC2903145591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1415 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 29 Mar (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has received a cable from 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council and deputy commander in chief of the armed forces, on purging saboteurs from the city of Karkuk.

In his cable, 'Izzat Ibrahim said: After relying on Almighty God, the victorious [word indistinc] Republican Guards and the forces participating with them moved between 0600 and 0700 yesterday to [words indistinct] and the purging forces between 0800 and 0830. The results were as you had wanted them for your Iraq and your sons.

He added: We entered the headquarters of the governorate at 1200. Your valiant soldiers, the [Ba'th] Party fighters, and the internal security forces spread out in the city to inspect and put things in order as it was your wish.

Ibrahim Announces Recapture of Irbil Governorate

NC3103161891 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1530 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Ladies and gentlemen, we have just received the following: 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council and deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces, today sent leader President Saddam Husayn and the Iraqi people the glad tidings of the purging of the dear Governorate of Irbil from the filth of the traitors and renegades, agents of Zionism.

In an address to the brave soldiers and the citizens of the Governorate of Irbil following the purge, 'Izzat Ibrahim said: In your name we greet leader President Saddam Husayn, our commander, [word indistinct], and the symbol of our Iraq and dignity. We pledge to him to march forward until we purge all the dear land of Iraq from the filth of the evildoers, agents of Zionism.

He added: Our fighting today, which culminated in the purging of the dear town of Irbil, is a unique, historic, and distinguished event commensurate with Iraq's glory and history in a manner that achieves harmony between the glorious past and our bright present, as well as harmony with our ideology, values, and the rebirth of civilization and humanity.

'Izzat Ibrahim greeted the heroism of the fighters of Republican Guard forces and the heroic Armed Forces—above all Husayn Kamil Hasan, minister of industry and military industrialization—for his remarkable role in inflicting ignominous defeat on the hooligans and aggressors.

Addressing the fighters, 'Izzat Ibrahim said: In the name of all ideals in which we believe [words indistinct] and in the name of struggling President Saddam Husayn, our struggling party, and our great people, to whom we

proudly belong, we proudly salute the heroism of the fighters of the Republican Guard forces and our heroic Armed Forces. We pledge to our struggling leader Saddam Husayn and our great people that we will fly high [word indistinct] to purge our dear Iraqi land from the filth of [words indistinct].

The celebration was attended by Husayn Kamil Hasan, minister of industry and military industrialization, and several members of the Armed Forces General Command.

Cables Saddam on 'Liberation'

NC3103203291 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1905 GMT 31 March 91

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn has received a cable from 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces, in which he conveyed the good news of the liberation of the city of Irbil, the capital of the autonomous rule of the Kurdish people, and the city of [word indistinct] from the filth of the mobs. Following is the text of the cable:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. "And say: truth has now arrived, and falsehood perished. For falsehood is by its nature bound to perish." [Koranic verse]

Victorious leader President Saddam Husayn: In my name and on behalf of my comrades 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, interior minister; Husayn Kamil Hasan, minister of industry and military industrialization; and the staff of the Armed Forces General Command, we extend to you once again our greetings and expression of everlasting love from the bottom of our hearts and convey to you glad tidings this time from Irbil, the capital of the autonomous rule of our dear Kurdish people, and from (?al-Dur), the bride of the north and its eternal spring. Your valiant soldiers set out this glorious morning, 15 of Ramadan, toward the cities of Irbil and (?al-Dur). We set out with them—with this faithful, mujahid convoy. It was only a matter of hours before we entered, along with them, the two cities, after having been purged from the filth of agents and traitors. Then, we performed the (?noon) prayers and a prayer of thanks amid a huge crowd of the faithful in the center of Irbil. Thanks be to God who bestowed dignity upon his soldiers, granted victory to his followers, and defeated the infidels alone, to quote God's beloved, honorable prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him.

Well-wishers send their best greetings, appreciation and gratitude for the [words indistinct] its kinfolk. They pledge to carry on with jihad under your high-flying banner so that Iraq will forever remain dignified, honorable, unyielding, and lofty [words indistinct] and its brave leader Saddam Husayn, may God grant him victory and loftiness and defeat his enemies and close their minds to faith so that they will not be guided until they have experienced painful punishment. God is great. May the enemies of Iraq be defeated. God is great, and manifest victory for Iraq.

[Signed] Vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council and deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces.

[Dated] 31 March 1991, corresponding to 15 Ramadan 1411 Hegira.

Leader President Saddam Husayn wrote with his blessed hand on the cable: God bless the dignity [word indistinct] in the battles of jihad, and thanks be to God for the manifest victory. God is great.

Ba'th Party Member Al-Majid Tours Dahuk

NC3103220991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2130 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Dahuk, 31 Mar (INA)—'Ali Hasan al-Majid, member of the Regional Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and Staff General 'Abd-al-Jabbar Shanshal, minister of state for military affairs, visited the city of Dahuk today after it was purged of the filth of the rancorous rebels who were nurtured on treason and treachery.

'Ali Hasan al-Majid and Staff General 'Abd-al-Jabbar Shanshal toured the city's neighborhoods and streets. They also observed the aftermath of the sabotage committed by [words indistinct] came from outside the borders to destroy citizens' property and loot and burn hospitals, public utilities, and the records and files of civil affairs offices that give evidence of the personal rights of citizens, with the intent to disrupt their security and stability.

The INA correspondent in the governorate reported that the citizens shouted greetings to President Saddam Husayn, expressing their pride in his unparalleled leadership and declaring their support for him and readiness to safeguard the great soil of Iraq, protect its secure borders, and defend the achievements of the 17-30 great July Revolution.

Cables Saddam on Capture of Dahuk

NC3103201591 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn has received a cable from Comrade 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, member of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party Regional Command, on the purging of the town of Dahuk of the fifth column of Zionists and the agent and criminal enemies of great Iraq. The following is the text of the cable:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. To the lofty symbol, leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him: From the town of Dahuk—the town of resorts and tourism, the town of high mountains—which has refused to obey the will of the Zionists and the

agent and criminal enemies of great Iraq, we send you glad tidings of the liberation of this town, which was stormed by traitors and agents and controlled by anti-Arabs with the help of Arab and Muslim neighbors.

Beginning in the early hours of this immortal day—on which we celebrate Easter with our brother Christians—the armies of glory from the sons of our Armed Forces set out, followed by comrades in struggle from the sons of the zealous Popular Army and from the sons of the Kurdish and Arab people, carrying the banner of God is Great.

With God's help and the courage of the men--the sons of great Iraq—they expelled the criminal traitors from the beautiful town of Dahuk. The criminal traitors had sowed corruption in the town, attacked our peaceful people, and destroyed citizens' records, the houses of learning, state institutions, schools, and hospitals, with the aim of implementing their lowly dreams and the plans of dirty Zionism. However—thanks be to God—because we have emerged victorious from all previous battles, we are becoming increasingly cohesive in our national unity.

Leader President: May you remain for us the symbol of our pride and dignity. We implore God almighty to preserve you, so that you will continue to hold the banner of God is great, protecting the glory of the good people and unifying the ranks of the believers. O lofty symnbol, may you stay on for great Iraq, its Arabs and Kurds, and other minorities.

From here, in my name and in the name of all strugglers in the heroic Armed Forces and the members of the Popular Army and the Arabs and Kurds in brave Dahuk Governorate, we pledge to you the pledge of loyal men that we will continue to raise the swords of justice, fighting evil wherever it may be, until it is nipped in the bud or expelled outside the border from which it infiltrated. God is great, and victory is for the believers.

[Signed] Comrade 'Ali Hasan al-Majid.

[Dated] 31 March 1991.

Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, wrote with his own handwriting on the cable the following: May God bless courageous struggler 'Ali Hasan al-Majid. May God bless the commanders and soldiers in the Armed Forces. May God bless our sons, comrades, and brothers from the ranks of the people and party. God is great, and shame to the shameless.

Al-Majid Says Country's 'Evil Cliques' Will Fail

NC2903181591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1730 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] Mosul, 29 Mar (INA)—Interior Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid has emphasized that under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn, the heads of Iraqis will remain raised high thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of its sons.

During his meeting at the Nineveh Governorate building with the governorate's Arab tribal chiefs, the interior minister said that the pages of the imperialist-Zionist conspiracy against steadfast Iraq will fail miserably, thanks to the will and concerted efforts of all the zealous Iraqis. Staff General 'Abd-al-Jabbar Shanshal, minister of state for military affairs, and Minister of State Arshad al-Zibari also attended the meeting.

Al-Majid called on the sons of Nineveh Governorate to stand as one man to ward off the evil from the sons of Iraq and to defend Iraq's borders from one end to the other so that Iraq's banner will remain waving high.

He stressed that the subversive actions that are perpetrated by the evil cliques against the sons of Iraq and their property will not bend the Iraqis determination and resolve to build their homeland and preserve the gains achieved by their glorious 17-30 July revolution.

Armed Forces Recapture Zakho; Rebels Surrender

NC0104112491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1116 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 1 Apr (INA)—INA has learned that our units at noon today recaptured the border town of Zakho. The rebels were kicked out of the town and ran away in fear. A number of rebels surrendered to our units.

Sons of our Kurdish people continue to cooperate with the military units in pursuing the saboteurs in the neighboring villages.

Minister Shanshal Visits Districts in Nineveh

NC2903220491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2115 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] Nineveh, 29 Mar (INA)—Staff General 'Abd-al-Jabbar Shanshal, minister of state for military affairs, has visited the districts of 'Aqrah and (?al-Shaykhan) in Nineveh after the governorate was purged of the sabotage cliques.

During the visit, the minister acquainted himself with the services, foodstuffs, and other necessities provided to citizens. The people of the two districts expressed their permanent and absolute readiness to defend Iraq against the forces of evil and aggression.

Ba'th Party Official Visits Al-Basrah Districts

NC2903170091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1530 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] The masses of (al-Qurn) and al-Zubayr Districts in al-Basrah Governorate have renewed their allegiance to the outstanding leader, President Saddam Husayn, and pledged to stand behind his leadership to uproot the plot and foil the schemes of the saboteurs from outside Iraq. This came during a visit to the two districts by 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, member of the regional

command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and secretary of the party organization in the south. He was accompanied by a number of officials in the governorate.

The INA correspondent in al-Basrah Governorate says that during his visit to (al-Qurn) District, comrade 'Abd-al-Ghafur attended a public symposium during which discussion centered on the criminal and devious dimensions of the plot that the gangs of sabotage and agentry tried to carry out by looting and destroying the property of the state and the citizenry, violating sanctities, and killing innocent people.

Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghafur said these evil deeds constitute a new page in the colonialist, Zionist aggression against Iraq to destroy the cultural structure of the struggling country of Iraq. He said this step is [word indistinct] forward and that Iraq, under the leadership of leader President Saddam Husayn, will remain steadfast and proud.

The seminar also discussed the role of citizens in reconstructing what the war of aggression and the gangs of agentry and sabotage have destroyed.

Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, accompanied by the al-Basrah governor and governorate officials, visited [word indistinct] and health departments in (al-Qurn). He also met with district officials. Emphasis was on the need to extend better services to citizens.

Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghafur also visited al-Zubayr district and met with administrative and party officials there. They discussed the reconstruction of what the agent saboteurs destroyed. The district people reaffirmed support for the great Iraqi leader, President Saddam Husayn, and readiness to help rebuild what the saboteurs destroyed in order to foil the plot against Iraq's sovereignty, unity, and security.

Minister Has Proof of Allies-Rebel 'Coordination'

NC3003160391 Paris AFP in English 1527 GMT 30 Mar 91

[By Anne Chaon]

[Text] Baghdad, March 30 (AFP)—Iraqi Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi accused the allies Saturday of working with Iraqi rebels, and said the government had proof of such "coordination."

Mr. Hammadi said insurgencies in the north and south of Iraq had "started or had been scheduled to start four days after the beginning of the land war" launched by U.S.-led forces on February 24.

"We have documents proving the existence of this coordination," the minister told reporters.

He also charged that Iran was involved in the nationwide rebellion.

Mr. Hammadi stressed that the oil city of Karkuk in the north was under regular army control.

"The army, backed by loyalist (Republican) Guards control the city of Karkuk and a zone of 30 kilometers (19 miles) around it," he said, adding that they had also recaptured two small towns near Dahuk, 'Akrah and Khitan.

(In Damascus, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said Saturday that Kurdish rebels in a counter-attack had pushed government troops out of Karkuk.)

Baghdad said it retook the city from rebels on Thursday.

Mr. Hammadi dismissed U.S. media reports that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn had diverted several billion dollars from his country's oil funds into personal accounts overseas.

He said it was a new campaign of slander aimed at sullying the president.

"We're willing to spend 99 per cent of this amount (8.3 billion dollars, according to the Washington Post) to whoever can prove the existence of these accounts in whichever bank," he said.

"While there was no fighting in the north or center of Iraq, Iranian newspapers and Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani called for the overthrow of President Husayn and assured that so-called liberation forces had seized Karbala' and al- Samawah," he said.

"American planes even overflew Iraqi troops that fought the insurgents on several occasions, and sometimes at low altitude," he said.

Mr. Hammadi, who was the Iraqi president's secretary for 10 years, was named culture and information minister in the new cabinet formed on March 23.

He attributed reports that some oil revenues had been siphoned by Mr. Husayn's family to U.S. propaganda.

"They're using the same procedure as with (former Philippines president Ferdinand) Marcos. But Saddam Husayn is not of that breed and they know it. He doesn't have a penny in the bank. Not even a chair to his name. This campaign is addressed at Iraqis, but here the people laughed," he said.

Mr. Hammadi said that the propagandists included a former Iraqi minister of planning, Jawad Hashim.

"This man then became president of the Arab Monetary Fund in Abu Dhabi where he diverted some 20 million dollars. He was charged for that and was sought by Interpol and the Americans know it," the information minister charged.

Asked about the challenge by President Husayn to his new ministers to whom he gave four to six months to succeed, Mr. Hammadi replied: "That's right. We were given a chance to prove our worth. If we fail, we go."

Trade Minister Brings Flour to Karkuk

NC3003211691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2010 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Karkuk, 30 Mar (INA)—Minister of Trade Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih visited the town of Karkuk, capital of the al-Ta'mim Governorate, today. He was accompanied by ministry officials and a large convoy of trucks laden with flour for the governorate's citizens.

The minister met with al-Ta'mim Governor Hashim Hasan al-Majid, several party officials, and the directors of commercial firms affiliated with the ministry. They reviewed the ministry's plans and measures to provide food to the citizens. They called on the local agents to immediately receive the flour and to distribute it to the citizens, since the local stock was looted and burned by criminals who infiltrated from the other side of the border. This proves that the saboteurs in the north and the south have joined the foreigners in committing sabotage in their hate and hostility toward the great people of Iraq.

The minister made an inspection tour of food stores, flour mills, and silos in the governorate. He met with the workers in the branches of the commercial firms. He called on them to double efforts to implement the ministry's distribution plan and to provide the citizens with their food needs.

During the tour the minister saw the total destruction to which the ministry's food depots in al-Ta'mim Governorate were subjected.

Amnesty for Defense Forces Who Return in North

NC3003200091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] INA has learned that the Revolution Command Council [RCC] today issued a general amnesty for all members of the national defense forces who return to the national ranks in the northern part of the country. INA has also learned that any of these members who brings with him a weapon will be honored when they report to the military units in their areas.

Liberation of Northern Cities, Villages Confirmed

NC3103084991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0738 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 31 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH writes that significant results will be announced during the next few days about the complete purging of Iraq's northern areas of pockets of rebels and aggressors.

The paper, the mouthpiece of the Defense Ministry, says in a report today on recent military and popular operations in northern Iraq that the results will be announced once Karkuk is purged of traitors and foreign infiltrators and when they have been eliminated from certain cities and villages such as 'Aqrah, al-Shaykhan, Fa'idah, and Sumayl. The liberation of these cities and villages has been confirmed by visits to these areas by ranking Iraqi officials.

AL-QADISIYAH cites field sources as saying that the factor that helped speed up the implementation of the military plan to end the rebellion and aggression against the northern cities and villages was the broad and effective participation of the Arab and Kurdish tribes in the region, who bore arms and confronted the gangs of rebels and invaders.

The sources, the paper adds, said that the sons of those tribes fought against the gangs of rebellion and prevented them from entering their villages and from seeking protection in their areas. This forced the gangs to flee. The sources told AL-QADISIYAH that a number of the region's tribes have joined the military units in fighting the infiltrators and rebels.

The field sources added that tightening control of the liberated areas, the precision with which the purging plan was implemented, and broad popular participation were all clearly reflected in the mass flight of the rebels and foreign infiltrators from several operations scenes as soon as the Iraqi forces approached these areas and before the start of armed operations.

Islamic Action Group on Capture of Ba'th Officials

NC3003210191 Paris AFP in English 1928 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus, March 30 (AFP)—Rebels retook control of the southern holy city of Karbala' early Saturday following heavy fighting with the troops of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, an opposition group here said.

"The men of the intifada (uprising) were able to retake control and prevailed Saturday morning in Karbala' following violent clashes, which plunged the city into a bloodbath," the Islamic Action Organization (IAO) said here.

According to a communique from the organization headed by Ayatollah Muhammad Taqiy al-Mudarisi, the rebels "captured several (ruling) Ba'th Party officials, including Mahdi Khazraji, Muhammad Matar, Diya' and Ala' Darwini."

The IAO said the rebels liberated thousands of political prisoners from the "terrible" Naqras Salman prison, established in the southern desert between al-Samawah and al-Nasiriyah on the border with Saudi Arabia.

"These ex-prisoners saw themselves faced with the choice of rejoining the uprising or emigrating," the communique added, saying that "Republican Guard units fired several Scud missiles on the city of al-Samawah."

In northern Iraq, "the revolutionaries captured some 800 mercenaries (foreigners) working for Saddam," it said.

Opposition Destroys Two Army Brigades

LD3003180991 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] During heavy clashes between popular and Ba'thist forces north and south of al-Basrah, two of Saddam's army brigades were totally destroyed. According to an IRNA report citing a group of Iraqi refugees who arrived in Iran today, in the battle between popular and Ba'thist forces in the town of Abu al-Khasib south of al-Basrah one of Saddam's army brigades was destroyed and the Ba'thist forces lost control of that town. Based on that report, the refugees said that the commander of Iraq's 6th Division, the head of the joint staff, and two commanders of that division's battalion were captured by the popular forces in the district of al-Qurnah. According to the same refugees, the towns of al-Haras and Garmatali north of al-Basrah have also been lost by the government. The commander of the popular forces in that battle was Staff Colonel Rashad al-Amare'i, who joined the popular forces in the past few weeks. During the battle, one of Saddam's army brigades dispatched to that town to crush the popular uprising was destroyed.

The same refugees concluded by saying that during these heavy clashes, which lasted two days, many citizens from those towns were killed, and the injured were transferred to treatment centers in al-Basrah by the people and the relief forces.

Popular Forces Control South; Fighting in Baghdad

NC3003180291 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] A spokesman of the Islamic al-Da'wah Party's Information Bureau has affirmed that the Iraqi popular forces are still in control of Karbala', al-Samawah, 'Ali al-Gharbi, (al-Shaykh Sa'd), and most of al-Nasiriyah. In a statement published in Damascus today, the spokesman said that fierce fighting is still going on between the Iraqi popular forces and the pro-regime forces in al-Basrah and al-'Amarah and that the popular forces are in control of large parts of them.

The spokesman said that a continuing uprising is taking place in Baghdad, particularly in the districts of al-Thawrah, Baghdad al-Jadidah, and al-Hurriyah where the popular forces tore down the pictures of the regime's president. This was not confined to popular districts, but extended to al-Tabawin and al-Masbah Districts in Baghdad.

The spokesman said that fierce battles are still taking place in Karkuk between the popular forces and the pro-regime forces, which have suffered heavy losses, prompting them to completely destroy Qarah Hinjirah town.

A spokesman of the Kurdistan Democratic Party has said that the popular forces were able this morning to seize control of Qarah Hinjirah, about 200 km from Karkuk, following fierce battles with the regime forces, which attacked the town with helicopters and bombers [qadhifat al-qanabil], killing and wounding a large number of people, including 400 children and women. The bodies of the victimes are still scattered around the town.

Al-Ta'mim Governor Details 'Sabotage' in Karkuk

NC3003114691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1020 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Karkuk, 30 Mar (INA)—Al-Ta'mim Governor Hashim Hasan al-Majid has said that the acts of rioting by mobs that came from across the border and the resulting burning, destruction, and plundering of the people's and public property prove the aggressive and destructive nature of these deviant groups.

In an interview with INA, he said that the coming of these scoundrels into the homeland and into beloved Karkuk had absolutely not been for a noble cause. He added: If it had been, then why were hospitals burned, innocent citizens murdered, and the city's basic municipal services, which had been established originally to cater to all the citizens without exception, sabotaged?

He added that the seditious calls raised by these deviant groups constitute irrefutable and tangible evidence, as shown by their disgraceful and deviant acts, that they are not committed to any humane doctrine, but only to their insatiable desire to cling to the trifles in life and not its basics.

Al-Majid gave some horrifying details of several incidents carried out by the merciless deviant throngs. These acts include the murder of innocent citizens, the violation of the privacy and sanctity of people's homes, mass burning of the people's and state property, and the rape of women under misleading slogans that are contrary to the values and customs established by heavenly messages and the prophets' holy traditions.

He noted that among the tragic incidents that had taken place in the Governorate of Karkuk were the mobs' destruction and sabotage of food and supply warehouses; the burning of children's playgrounds, restaurants, hotels, shops, and hospitals; and the looting of these places without any of these people stopping to consider that these institutions existed originally to serve the citizens, after the great 17-30 July revolution had worked for years to maintain these facilities with the efforts and sweat of Iraqis and despite the enemy's incessant schemes against great Iraq.

Opposition Forces Tighten Siege of Al-Mawsil

LD2903171791 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] In the continuing popular uprising in Iraq, the town of Shaykhan 60 km northeast of al-Mawsil was captured by Iraqi opposition groups. The spokesperson of one of the Iraqi opposition groups in Damascus said:

By liberating the town of Shaykhan the opponents tightened their siege of al-Mawsil. According to the said spokesperson, the significance of al-Mawsil is no less than that of Karkuk, and the capture of that town constitutes a turning point in the fight against Saddam. Another Iraqi opposition group based in Damascus said today that the Iraqi opponents continue to hold Karbala under their control, and the fighting is still in progress in al-Basrah and al-Najaf.

According to these sources, Baghdad is also under a state of emergency, and every day there are demonstrations and clashes between the opponents and Saddam's republican and security guards deployed in that city.

According to a Central News Unit report citing these sources, the Iraqi forces today attacked the town of Chamchamal 60 km north of Karkuk with napalm and phosphorus bombs, as a result of which a number of civilians were killed and injured.

Rebels Report Successful Attack on Tuz

NC2903153991 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1439 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] In a new and serious development in northern Iraq, our latest information confirms that the revolutionaries successfully attacked Tuz, the first axis in the defensive line the regime is quickly setting up to defend the capital city of Baghdad. We will provide you with further details when we have them.

In a related development, our people in steadfast Dahuk have continued to defend their city in the face of counterattacks and violent shelling. The city's revolutionary committees have appealed to the international community to take up its responsibility regarding possible massacres by Saddam or possible bombing with long-range missiles, which the committees expect to take place.

Helicopter Downed; District Officer Joins Rebels

NC2903163691 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1439 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] While the uprising staged by the sons of our valiant people continues in the liberated cities of northern Iraq, our people in southern and central Iraq continue to resist Saddam's gangs whose locations have begun to fall to the revolutionaries. As part of the actions of zealous and honorable individuals who are deserting their military units and quitting their administrative and organizational institutions, the al-Kahla' District officer along with his 40 staffers have joined the revolution's ranks. Greetings to our heroic revolutionaries and to the courageous men who joined the ranks of the uprising and voiced their honorable rejection of the tyrannical Baghdad regime.

Within the framework of the repression of our people's uprising in southern Iraq, a helicopter belonging to the regime attempted on 25 March to attack the city of al-Kahla', in the al-'Amarah Governorate. Our revolutionaries there shot the helicopter down in the nearby marshland with an RPG-7. We have received reports from the revolutionary committees there saying that two of the helicopter's crewmen were seriously wounded, while the other two were captured.

Opposition Downs Planes Over Dahuk, Karkuk

NC3003081491 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Iraqi revolutionaries announced last night that they have recaptured the northern Iraqi oil city of Karkuk and that the Iraqi regime's forces are withdrawing. REUTER cited the spokesman for the Iraqi Kurdistan front [as heard] as saying that the whole city of Karkuk is now under the control of the revolutionaries and that the Iraqi regime's troops are fleeing the city. Spokesman Burhan Salih said fighting is occuring on the highway between Karkuk and Tikrit. He said the revolutionaries carried out their counterattack yesterday in Karkuk from four points in the region of (Qarhanjir) and seized Iraqi Army reinforcements. He added that the Iraqi regime forces in the region of Qarhanjir intentionally killed around 400 women and children in a deliberate policy to terrorize the civilian citizens and warn those in other parts of Kurdistan what could happen if the citizens continue their defiance of the Iraqi regime.

The revolutionaries announced earlier that they had carried out a tactical withdrawal from the city and then a counterattack to recapture Karkuk at 1800 yesterday. [passage omitted]

Fakhri Karim, member of the Iraqi Communist Party's Political Bureau and one of the leaders of the Joint Action Committee of the Iraqi opposition forces, voiced the opposition's insistence on toppling Saddam Husayn's regime and setting up a democratic alternative to the regime in Iraq. Karim said in a statement to Radio Monte Carlo last night that all the main political trends in Iraqi society have united their efforts under these tense circumstances to topple Saddam's regime and set up a democratic alternative that stems from the will of the Iraqi people and expresses their aspirations.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] sent a message to As'ad al-As'ad, acting secretary general of the Arab League, and to the heads of the delegations participating in the Arab League Council meetings today in Cairo, in which it expressed its concern for the unity of the Iraqi territories and its readiness to defend Iraq's sovereignty. The PUK said in its message that condemning the oppressive practices and organized annihilation campaigns carried out by the Iraqi forces is a humanitarian duty serving the principle of historical relations and joint destiny.

The office of Ayatollah Muhammad Taqiy al-Mudarrisi, an Iraqi opposition leader, said yesterday that the uprising of the Iraqi people continues despite the bestial attacks by the Iraqi regime's forces on the positions of

the revolutionaries. He said that uprising forces continue to resist the extensive land, sea, and air attacks against the city of Karkuk. They have downed two planes, one in Dahuk and the other in Karkuk. He added that as a result of the intensive shelling, hundreds of citizens have fallen, either martyred or injured, in the city of Karkuk.

Rebels Seize Weapons

NC3003114991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1115 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] A responsible source from the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] has said that the popular uprising forces' recapture of the city of Karkuk yesterday is an indication of the soundness of the revolution and its true popular path toward liberty and dignity. The source said in a statement distributed in Damascus today that, despite attempts by the regime and its criminal forces backed with various missiles, aircraft, and heavy artillery to take control of this city, the popular forces recaptured it and expelled the remaining members of the regime's mercenaries. The source said that after expelling the Iraqi regime's forces from the city of Karkuk, the popular forces seized large amounts of weapons and military equipment left behind by the regime's cliques.

Iraqi Refugee Reports Many Army Defections

LD3003174491 Tehran IRNA in English 1653 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Ahvaz, Mar. 30, IRNA—Some 6,000 Iraqi soldiers of the 20th Infantry Division of the 5th Corps in al-Amarah Friday joined the people fighting to topple the Baghdad regime, a resident of al-Amarah who took refuge in Iran told IRNA Saturday.

The refugee who identified himself as Muhammad Hamdan al-Saedi also claimed that since the start of the popular uprising in Iraq more than 120,000 soldiers of various units have deserted and joined the rising people in northern and southern Iraq.

He said government troops have killed and wounded a large number of people and demolished 400 houses in the towns of al-Amarah and Kahla in Maysan Governorate.

Villages in Maysan Governorate were also the target of air and ground attacks by the Republican Guards as a result of which many villagers lost their lives and over 1,000 heads of cattle were killed.

Refugees Cited on Indiscriminate Firing by Regime

NC3003104091 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0920 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus, 30 Mar (SANA)—People escaping from Saddam Husayn's tyranny tell of the tragedy the Iraqi people are suffering, particularly in the southern areas. Descriptions by these people reflect the Iraqi people's total rejection of the fascist regime of Baghdad and their determination to continue resisting until this regime is overthrown and its symbols are brought to account for their crimes against the people.

In a report from Kuwait published today, TISHRIN cites these people as saying that citizens left all their belongings behind to escape to safety with their children when the regime's guards opened fire indiscriminately on them with guns, rifles, and missiles. The number of innocent victims reached tens of thousands and some villages and cities disappeared completely as a result of this barbarian bombardment.

The Iraqis told how Saddam's guards fired 40 missiles on al-Najaf on 21 March, turning it to rubble. They mentioned people being shot in al-Basrah, Karbala', and other places. Even children were forced to stand against the wall with raised hands to be shot, on the excuse that their fathers or brothers belong to the Iraqi opposition, they said.

The people said that resistance is growing stronger and that the regime will be crushed very soon.

Paper Describes U.S. Plans To Build Regional Bases

NC3103104291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 31 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH says that the United States and its military commands have drawn up plans within the framework of the new order that has been proposed by Bush. The plans concern new balances in the Middle East now that the hotbed of conflict has been transferred from Europe and Latin America to the oil regions and to rich countries on whose resources and wealth the industrial countries rely.

In today's editorial, the paper notes that the United States tried during the past two years to establish the Rapid Deployment Force to operate in the oil regions. The United States held unilateral talks with each state to work out an agreement for the establishment of new military bases in the Gulf and on Arab land.

The paper expresses surprise over the rapid acceptance of the U.S. conditions by some of these states while the oil shaykhs succumbed to the imperialist and Zionist interests without assessing the magnitude of dangers resulting from these bases and the dangers threatening them and the Arab nation.

AL-QADISIYAH, which expresses the Defense Ministry's opinions, draws the attention of all Arab people to the fact that confronting the threat of the imperialist presence in the region is a pan-Arab duty. The paper says that Washington is preparing a study to make radical changes to the strategic principles that have underpinned its policy and its foreign and defensive priorities, particularly with regard to U.S. dealings with Arab countries and the building of bases and defense systems in the Gulf.

The paper notes that the U.S. plan to expand the network of bases it will build in the region is based on the head and limbs diplomacy [diplumaciyat al-ra's wa al-atraf] practiced by George Bush and his secretary of state and his counterparts in Canada, Italy, the European troika, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, and Syria. This diplomacy has been ripened by postwar circumstances to plant the region with U.S. bases within a network linked to one administration.

AL-QADISIYAH scoffs at the fact that some regimes have been deceived into believing that the presence of these bases on their territory is to defend their states against foreign threats and to protect their thrones. It says that the real objective is to facilitate the implementation of a U.S. plan drawn up long before the war and the aggression against Iraq in a bid to achieve U.S. hegemony and supremacy.

Support for Saddam Key To Crushing 'Plots'

NC3003100691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0825 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH says that when the Iraqis decided to confront the plot against Iraq, they were always aware of the chapters that this plot could entail.

In its editorial today, the newspaper says that the Iraqis are fully aware of the fact that the enemies' plans to dismember Iraq and turn it into statelets, sects, and minorities are part of a plot whose principal objective is to undermine all the gains accomplished by the 17 July Revolution. Foremost among these gains is Iraqi national unity, which caused nervousness among the plotters and those waiting for the chance to do evil to Iraq.

The paper adds that when the chapter of aggression failed to attain all its objectives thanks to splendid Iraqi steadfastness and because nothing is left for this aggression to achieve because Iraq remained united behind its leadership in confronting the aggression, the forces that are hostile to Iraq activated other means to persist in destroying Iraq and allowed wicked people to carry out acts in a bid to complete the U.S. scheme by undermining the Iraqi social structure.

AL-QADISIYAH notes that the mobs tried to obliterate the Iraqi identity and to distort the sense of belonging while the U.S. aggression tried to destroy Iraq's infrastructure. However, the outcome was completely contrary to what the hostile circles imagined.

The paper stresses that Iraqi steadfastness was the expected outcome and the people's support for the leadership of President Saddam Husayn was the most important factor that helped extinguish the sedition and crush its effects. The paper says that the Iraqis' victories show that the other chapter of the plot was utterly defeated and that this failure was inevitable thanks to the awareness of the loyal Iraqi people, their support for their leader, and their determination to protect the land of great Iraq against all plots, treason, and robbery.

The paper concludes: We have proven to the whole world that we are stronger than all conspiracies and conspirators regardless of the size of the plots, the schemers, and those who carried them out. Great Iraq will remain cherished and united and its sons will show no mercy on those who tried to harm it, as history will stand witness.

Paper Says Gulf Security Must Meet Peoples' Needs

NC0104111291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0845 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 1 Apr (INA)—A study prepared by an Iraqi professor affirms that many plans that lack the most basic strategic security principles have been put forward for the Gulf region.

Professor 'Abbas Ghali, lecturer at al-Basrah University, published an article in Iraqi newspapers today saying: It is possible to put forward practical proposals reflecting reality for Gulf security, proposals aimed at serving the region's interests and that are also in harmony with the changes in the world and the requirements and needs of the region's peoples. The first of these principles requires viewing security in the Arabian Gulf as the security of the societies living in the Gulf region rather than that of the political regimes in the region. Besides, any security plan should be linked to the grave problem plaguing people in all states of the Gulf region; namely, the problem regarding political decisionmaking.

Dr. Ghali affirmed that it is impossible to draw up a plan for the security of the Arabian Gulf and to ensure this security without establishing an organic link between Gulf security and pan-Arab security. He added that these perceptions in terms of structure and concepts came into being because the world order has gone through substantial changes since the early nineties.

Concluding his article, the Iraqi lecturer said that ensuring the security of the Arabian Gulf is not an easy task that can be achieved in a short period of time, because this issue concerns the security of the societies living in the region.

Council Urges Iraq's Expulsion From Arab League

LD2903212191 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Iraq in Arabic 1500 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] The Free Iraqi Council has appealed to the Arab League Council to suspend the membership of the Saddam regime in the Arab League and all its other institutions until the regime is overthrown.

The Free Iraqi Council, in a letter to the league, appealed to the league to place full responsibility on the Saddam regime for all the crimes that have been committed in Iraq and Kuwait, and asked that he be declared a war criminal who must be placed on trial.

It also called on the league to admit representatives of the Iraqi opposition to the meetings of the Arab League as observers.

The letter to the council, which is one of the Iraqi opposition groups, also said, commenting on the decision of the regime to take part in the 95th ordinary session of the Arab League Council in Cairo, that the council is concerned enough to explain that participation by the Saddam regime in the league's meetings constitutes a stab against the uprising of the Iraqi people. In addition, if this regime's participation did take place, it would represent ignoring the black page of Saddam's regime, which is full of criminal deeds and hostile practices violating human rights, Arab ethics, and international laws.

Paper Sees Iranian Attempt at Infiltration

NC3103152391 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 29 Mar 91 p 3

[Editorial: "Are They Hooligans, or Are They Carrying Out a Foreign Plan?"]

[Text] Perhaps we are all entitled to ask: What was the target of the mobs and their followers who destroyed many public and official landmarks in their feast of plundering and looting in a number of cities in the central Euphrates area and southern Iraq? Why did they focus on specific official departments in charge of documentation? What did they want from all this?

It is appropriate to go back to certain events in history. When outside parties "planned" disturbances in Iraq in 1980, and when these parties "instructed" their followers to destroy and burn specific targets inside Iraq and assassinate a number of officials there, Iraq knew that these disturbances had come out of the Iranian community in Iraq. Therefore, Iraq expelled the members of the community in accordance with the prerogatives of sovereignty.

It seems that a number of officials in Iran still plan to restore the Iranian community to its former status, so that they can push any group to carry out what has been planned for it to do. This is why the saboteurs and thieves who joined in the plundering, looting, sabotage, and destruction burned documents supporting ownership of homes and vehicles and all other documents proving an individual's nationality and place of residence. Thus, the saboteurs burned the departments of civil registry, real estate registration, citizenship, conscription, and vehicle licensing.

The reason behind this deliberate destruction of documents proving an individual's nationality and possesions is to try to get the members of the Iranian community and others to be sent to Iraq back into the country to carry out their intended plans. Perhaps this feverish endeavor to destroy what can prove Iraqi nationality is intended to suppress the features of this nationality through burning, destruction, and sabotage.

Otherwise, how can we explain that official departments in charge of documentation were the target of the saboteurs in all cities, as if they had agreed among themselves!! In fact, there is agreement, because one party has trained them to perform the acts they have been engaged in. This party plans to exploit the U.S.-Zionist-Atlantic aggression on Iraq to fulfill its vile ambitions.

In Iraq, as we express our pain over what took place, we are also overwhelmed by disgust as we follow reports about the barbaric crimes of these mobs, especially the destruction of documents. If those who carried out such acts think that by burning these documents they will blur the differences between them and the noble sons of Iraq then they are deluding themselves. An individual's nationality is proved by his lasting loyalty and genuine feeling for the homeland.

If sabotage destroyed documents that prove an Iraqi's nationality and his possessions, it however will not award the "foreigners" from the other side of the border rights that belong to the Iraqi people.

Conduct of Kurdish Leaderships Criticized

NC3003142091 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 26 Mar 91 p 4

[Column by the Editor: "Return to Old Habits"]

[Text] No political leadership has harmed a national movement as much as some Kurdish militias in Iraq have harmed our genuine and good Kurdish people. What is really painful is that these leaderships have not only put themselves at the service of the imperialist powers and participated in implementing their policies, but also continued to take the Zionist example as a model and follow it in many details.

If we review the overall conduct of these political leaderships, particularly from the 17-30 July revolution in 1968 up to now, we will clearly see that because of their suspicious ties with all the enemies of Iraq, these leaderships adopted positions serving all the colonialist forces that are hostile to all peoples as well as the Kurdish people.

These suspicious leaderships have acted against the will of the Kurds, deprived Iraq's Kurdistan of the chances of progress, and harmed the great Iraqi homeland by standing in the ranks of its enemies, taking orders from them, and forcing many sectors of our Kurdish people to act against their homeland's interests. Now, they are forcing them to implement the Iranian shah's policies that are hostile to Iraq and its people. As a result, Mustafa Barzani died lonely in the United States after he relinquished everything and agreed that he and the movement he had led should fight on behalf of Iran's shah and his masters against Iraq and the interests of the Kurds themselves.

Some people believed that these leaderships had learned from their experience and benefited from it. During the eight-year war, however, that belief turned out to be unfounded. As a result, they repeated the bitter experience by acting against their Iraqi homeland and the will of the Kurdish citizens and by carrying out a major act of treason in directing their rifles at the back of the Iraqi fighter, who was defending Iraq's land and Iraq's Kurdistan. When the eight-year war ended with Iraq's victory and the unity of its land and people, these leaderships naturally should have realized that the foreigner, who persecutes the Kurds within its political entity, would not be concerned about Iraq's Kurds.

The traitor, however, cannot but be a traitor. While the Iraqis were at the peak of their confrontation with the 30-state aggression, these [Kurdish leaderships] returned to their old habits, and these suspicious Kurdish political leaderships decided to fight in the ranks of Iraq's enemies, take orders from them, and cross the Iraqi border in an act of aggression, believing that this would achieve the goals that their previous treacherous experiences failed to achieve. But their plans have been aborted as always happens to the foolish traitors, and Iraq achieved victory, reaffirmed its territorial integrity, and entrenched its people's unity. As usual, our Kurdish people also demonstrated their genuine nationalism, and the humiliated traitors revealed their eternal disgrace.

Shamir on Security, Peace Process

TA2903112291 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT (PESAH supplement) in Hebrew 29 Mar 91 pp 6, 7

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir by Dan Shilon; place and date not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Shilon] After each terrorist attack, you promise: "We will cut off the arm that took a Jewish life," but in fact, the murderers' arms are becoming longer.

[Shamir] There are problems, there are perils, and we have enemies. It is a fact. The war against Jewish existence in Eretz Yisra'el has not ended. So what? Do not millions of Jews live here, and is not their number growing constantly? Why must we sink in unjustified despair? With all the pain for the loss of human life and for this or that murder, we should not forget that we are talking about a few people only.

[Shilon] Even your own minister Ari'el Sharon says there is no government in this country.

[Shamir] Anyone can see this is a gross exaggeration. If there is no government, who is ruling? And if there is no government, how can anyone be a member in it?

[Shilon] The "anyone" is Sharon. Are you implying that he should draw personal conclusions?

[Shamir] This is not my business. However, the State of Israel exists, and there is a government, and there is security, and there are problems, but there is also inclination to irritability, overstating, and exaggeration.

[Shilon] Sharon has affirmed that he can solve the security problems. Why don't you try him?

[Shamir] I am not going to make changes in my cabinet today.

[Shilon] Let us discuss practical solutions. Is the idea to close the territories to single men an appropriate solution?

[Shamir] There is always a considerable distance between ideas and decisions and implementation. No one is checking the marital state of Arab or Jews. The closure of the territories is a very complex option. It can be imposed for a day or two or three, but not longer—and this has nothing to do with my political positions.

[Shilon] Is the deportation of Palestinian leaders from the territories the measure that will bring about calm?

[Shamir] Deportations are an effective deterrent measure. The situation would have been worse without deportations.

[Shilon] Deportations at the cost of marring our relations with the United States?

[Shamir] I hope they will not affect our relations with the United States. The Americans know Israel must take care of its security. We have occasional arguments on the issue, but we are the ones who have to see to our security in the final count.

[Shilon] This is not the conclusion of the Gulf war. When Israelis found themselves exposed to missile attacks, alien elements insisted on taking care of their security, which they did without any great success.

[Shamir] We face many security problems, and they are not new. They were born with our birth as a nation; they have existed ever since we came to this country. The last episode is merely a sequence to all the preceding chapters. For years, we have fortified our forbearance, our power, and our security.

[Shilon] Will we, in the meantime, remain exposed to missile attacks without being able to provide an appropriate response?

[Shamir] We have answers, and even during the Gulf war, we had answers to the missile threat. If we did not resort to the means at our disposal, it was because we estimated that at that time, they were unnecessary and that it was preferable to rely on the means of others. We are neither stupid nor helpless.

[Shilon] These days, the state comptroller is in the process of exposing another security fiasco: the distribution of defective gas masks to the population.

[Shamir] On this matter, I tend to believe the chief of staff's statement. I trust him, and I believe he will be able to convince everyone that he is right.

[Shilon] It is the same chief of staff who said that "peace is more important than territories." Do you trust him on this point as well?

[Shamir] I do not think he said that. He did not mean it, and he certainly did not intend to voice a political stand.

[Shilon] To the point: Is peace not worth the territories?

[Shamir] Peace, security, and territories are interconnected. They are what a nation's strength is gauged by. Larger territory, bigger population, and stronger economy all indicate the nation's strength.

[Shilon] Will this nation's strength be impaired if a territorial concession is made in exchange for peace, in which you, Yitzhaq Shamir, believe?

[Shamir] I know of no nation anywhere in the world prepared to make territorial compromises. I know of no country in the world constantly preoccupied with the question of what to do with the territories that are in its possession and under its sovereignty. Why should we be an exception?

[Shilon] Are you saying that the territories are not an issue for negotiations?

[Shamir] I have not said that, and we cannot say that, because of the agreements we have signed: the Camp

David accords, which are based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. When we reach negotiations, and if I still have clout, I will try to effect negotiations out of which we emerge unscathed and as strong as we entered them.

[Shilon] Do you not see the contradiction in what you have said? Are not the Camp David accords, which Israel signed, based on a UN resolution speaking plainly of the restitution of "territories"?

[Shamir] There is no contradiction. To date, no one has come up with a better solution on how to achieve peace between us and the Arabs than the agreement we signed with Egypt. Neither we nor the Egyptians ceded any principles. It was the only way we could sign the agreement.

[Shilon] Did we sign without intending to consummate it?

[Shamir] None of us signed anything he did not intend to consummate. Israel abides by all its international commitments, including the financial ones.

[Shilon] How will you respond to the signals of James Baker, who expects Israel to make political gestures?

[Shamir] We are trying to reach negotiations with our neighbors, and will continue doing so.

[Shilon] Will this attempt include your consent to meet with the Palestinian leaders whom Baker met during his visit here?

[Shamir] Our approach is based on two-track activity: the normalization of Israel's relations with Arab countries and interim arrangements between Israel and the residents of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

[Shilon] Can the residents of Judaea and Samaria be represented by Faysal al-Husayni?

[Shamir] People who do not recognize the Camp David accords and reject the two-track approach cannot be party to negotiations. Talking with PLO supporters is useless and pointless.

[Shilon] Are you thus ruling out Faysal al-Husayni and his associates?

[Shamir] Oh, well, I am familiar with their views. They say they are speaking on behalf of the PLO. There is no point in conducting negotiations with them.

[Shilon] These days it is difficult to find Arabs in the territories who are not PLO supporters.

[Shamir] It is because of the terror.

[Shilon] The terror is going on, and these peoples' identification with the PLO persists. Does this mean that we are doomed to a profound political freeze?

[Shamir] The duration of the stalemate works against them, not us. From their viewpoint, they would be well advised to adopt our approach to peace.

[Shilon] What can be done if they refuse? The violence continues, and their approach to peace is totally different from yours.

[Shamir] I think we will overcome the current situation. There is no stalemate. Their violence will peter out. They have to realize that it only damages them. In a few years, you will be surprised at having ever asked this question.

[Shilon] Talking of the track of normalization with the Arab countries, have you received any signs that King Husayn became a partner for negotiations in the wake of the Gulf war?

[Shamir] I cannot speak in his behalf, but various people with whom I have spoken told me that this assumption is not baseless. There are encouraging signs testifying to this. Nowadays, there is greater willingness to accept Israel. It may take time, but there has been positive progress.

[Shilon] Why don't you invite him to Jerusalem right after Passover?

[Shamir] I do not believe in ostentatious declarations. If I could do something tangible that would bring King Husayn to Jerusalem, I would do it, but I will avoid declarations.

[Shilon] Foreign press says you have already met with him.

[Shamir] Foreign press says many things about me, most of them untrue.

[Shilon] And in this case?

[Shamir] This case is no exception.

[Shilon] In an earlier interview conducted about a year ago, you did not rule out outright the possibility of territorial concessions in the Golan Heights in return for peace with Syria.

[Shamir] I have never said we could discuss territory with Syria. I take care not to discuss territory. Territory is part of the nation's soul. Discussing territory with people stabs me in the heart. I cannot even talk about it; it is part of my existence, part of myself. [passage omitted]

Defense Cabinet Issues Tougher Territories Policy

TA3103170591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1605 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Report by Shlomo Raz]

[Text] The defense cabinet, or under its updated name, the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs, this afternoon decided to toughen Israel's policy concerning the Arabs from the territories. Among the steps that will be taken, the following are worth noting:

The intention to increase deterrence has led to a policy of deporting inciters from locations where murderers, knifers, and others emerged. The deportation punishment is considered especially effective. At the same time, the houses of those involved in the attacks will be demolished.

Supervision over the issue of licenses to work in Israel will be made very strict. A quota of licenses will be set, thus lowering the number of laborers from the territories within the Green Line boundaries. People with criminal or security records will not be given such entry permits.

Arabs from the territories will not be allowed to enter Israel with their privately owned cars; they may only use public transportation. Employers in Israel will be required to be more responsible and will be asked not to employ laborers who do not have a license from the Israeli Employment Service.

The ministers debated the effectiveness of the prevailing instructions by the defense authorities on opening fire. It seems that these regulations will remain in place.

The session lasted less than two hours, and the prime minister asked the ministers to keep their lips sealed.

Ehud Baraq Appointed New Chief of Staff

TA0104071891 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0700 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] A ceremony was held at the prime minister's office a short time ago to mark the appointment of the new chief of staff. The prime minister and the defense minister pinned the insignia of lieutenant general on Ehud Baraq's uniform. The prime minister thanked the outgoing chief of staff.

In his farewell address, Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron said that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] embodies everything that is good and fine about Israeli society. This may be the reason why the IDF enjoys such a high level of national consensus, Shomron asserted.

The incoming chief of staff, Ehud Baraq, said he is aware of the confidence placed in him and the serious responsibility the job entails. I will do everything I can to meet the test of this confidence and responsibility, Baraq said.

Shomron and Baraq are now being hosted by President Hayim Herzog at his residence. From there, they will proceed to a ceremony at the General Staff headquarters in Tel Aviv.

Curfews Lifted; Jerusalem Still Off-Limits

TA3103044291 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0400 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] this morning lifted the curfew on the Gaza Strip and on locations where it had been imposed in Judaea and Samaria. The blockade on the territories was also lifted, and laborers can now leave for work in Israel. However, residents of the territories were not permitted to enter Jerusalem this morning.

IDF Sources on Modernization, Troop Reduction

TA2903132291 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Mar 91 p A3

[Report by Re'uven Pedhatzur]

[Text] Top-level IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and Defense Ministry sources assert that "the IDF will have to go through a series of powerful upheavals, that will change its form and lead to a significant reduction in its size. These upheavals are dictated by reality and they cannot be put off. The IDF will feel the shock in 1991 and in coming years, as the multi-year work plan that is currently being prepared shall show. We will have a smaller Army, but one with more sophisticated and state of the art weapon systems."

Addressing the need for these overhauls they said: "the work plan, which is currently being formulated and which will be presented for the new chief of staff's perusal in about three months, will not leave one field without far reaching changes."

In addition to eliminating units and cutting back on the order of battle, the IDF will be forced to significantly reduce the scope of its activity. Among other things, there will be a cut back in training and the number of annual reserve duty days used by the IDF will be reduced. More routine security operations, that are currently carried out by soldiers on reserve duty, will be turned over to regular troops, in a bid to conserve financial resources. This will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on the training of the standing army, but there is no alternative.

The capability to undertake these serious changes is based on the assessment of the threat the IDF will have to face in the coming years. According to this estimate, the threat to Israel has been markedly reduced following the severe damage dealt to Iraq's military, and this will permit the IDF to take risks in the near future.

The multi-year plan, which will supplant the program currently in effect, has still not been given a name. The IDF's Planning Branch will soon suggest several possible titles, and Chief of Staff Baraq will apparently choose the name. The intention is to give the plan a name that will express the message it wants to convey.

This time the message will be clear: A massive diversion of resources to development and procurement of new weapon systems, which will mainly be based on precision guided munitions. This procurement will be carried out mainly by the Air Force and by the ground forces and will be greatly founded on original weapon systems, developed and produced by the Israeli defense industries.

As far as is known, Defense Minister Moshe Arens, supports the concept demanding the upheavals in the IDF, and is very involved in the process of consolidating the IDF multi-year work plan. Among other things, the defense minister has instructed the General Staff to include the Arrow antiballistic missile project in this plan.

Editor Explains Palestinian Situation

TA3103175591 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 31 Mar 91 pp 7, 8

[Article by Mikhal Sela': "Waking Up From a Dreamworld"]

[Excerpt] "I wrote the article because I arrived at the conclusion that the people must be persuaded to wake up from their dreamworld and face reality. It is imperative that we tell them that things are not going exactly the way we would like them to go, and that we must act within the possibilities at hand," says Radi al-Jara'i, an editor in the East Jerusalem paper AL-FAJR. Al-Jara'i recently wrote an article published in his paper analyzing the Palestinian situation in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Referring to the need for the Palestinians to become part of the processes aimed at establishing a stable order in the Middle East, al-Jara'i proposes to disband the Palestine National Council [PNC] and call for an election with the participation of the inhabitants of the territories. The elected council would become the first Palestinian parliament.

Al-Jara'i, aged 40, has spent 12 years in jail for his activities in Fatah: nine years from 1976 to 1985 (he was released in the exchange deal with Ahmad Jibril), one and a half years from 1987 to 1989, and two months later he was arrested again and sentenced to two years in prison. On 24 January this year, at the height of the fighting in the Gulf, al-Jara'i was released from Ashqelon Prison. He has very clear ideas about the situation of the Palestinians. "There are radio, newspapers, television, and many political discussions in jail. Politics is the raison d'etre of the security prisoner."

Not indulging in any self-pity, he describes himself as a person fighting for an important goal, to which end he is prepared to make sacrifices. He is modest and self-effacing, but exudes clout and charisma. During these Ramadan nights, he sits with groups of Bi'r Zayt University students and argues with them about the situation and the need for new ways of thinking. He brims with ideas and self-criticism, some of which remains off-the-record for the moment.

The war has changed the atmosphere and sobered up the people, al-Jara'i says. The Palestinian people, particularly in the rural areas, must be taught that there is a gap between reality and illusions. For hours he discusses politics with youngsters, both when he is in jail and outside it. "They think the PLO is a sacred cow. But I ask them: which is more advanced, the liberation organization or the state? The final goal is the state, not the organization. The latter will be disbanded when the Palestinian state is founded."

In his opinion, the Palestinians are today experiencing a new phase. The intifadah must be pursued, perhaps even more intensely, but practical steps must be taken at the same time to rebuild the national institutions so they can serve as the mechanism with which to execute the political initiative of the Palestinians.

In his talks with youngsters he tries to close the gap between the positions and views of the public leadership and certain sectors of the Palestinian public.

"The group known as the local leadership is not necessarily the real leadership that emerged from the field," al-Jara'i says, as he mentions the names of people whom he would not like to see as part of the delegations that daily meet representatives of foreign countries. "But this is the reality created by the circumstances, and we must make the most of it and stop living in a dreamworld."

This is what he tries to explain to the people surrounding him, who criticize the bourgeois who declared themselves leaders, although nobody appointed them. "The most important point in the meeting with Baker was that the Palestinians came to it after the PLO institutions passed an official resolution approving the meeting," al-Jara'i says. He admits that the initiative came from here, from the territories, but that the backing granted by the PLO was important both to the population in the territories and as a message to the Americans.

He thinks this is also a good reason to hold the elections to the PNC; so that the right people should rise, people who enjoy public support, people who after being elected will know that they bear a serious responsibility.

The debate on the notion of holding elections to the PNC has been gaining momentum from the time it was first voiced in public, immediately after the end of the Gulf war. "What have the elections got to do with the opportunity of reaching a peace settlement?" asks Hilmi Hanun in reaction to the article of Hanna Sinyurah who linked possible elections to the PNC to the latest proposals about a political arrangement in the Middle East.

Hanun, the mayor of Tulkarm, is the only one of the mayors in the West Bank elected in 1976 who remains in power. He is the chairman of AL-FAJR's board of directors, a Fatah old hand, and a member of the outgoing generation of political leaders in the West Bank.

According to Hanun, there is no sense in holding elections only in the territories seeing that nobody questions the status of the PLO as their sole legitimate representative. In his opinion, the Palestinians must now concentrate on the urgent issue of bringing pressure to bear on the Western countries and the United Nations to use a single standard with regard to their determination to execute the UN Security Council resolutions. "If we

want to solve the problem, we must stress that negotiations can only be held with the PLO, which would be an active party in the negotiations that would be held under international auspices."

In the meantime, despite censorship restrictions on the Palestinian papers and the ban on public rallies in the territories, articles arguing for and against elections are published every day. Al-Jara'i plans to write more articles in which he will voice his opinion about the situation, the Palestinians, and Israel's left wing. The Israelis are his next goal.

"With our people, we must convince them that the state is a more important goal than the organization. With your people, somebody must step forward and tell Prime Minister Shamir that Eretz Yisra'el (al-Jara'i uses the Hebrew words) is not the goal but Israel's existence amid guarantees for its security." [passage omitted]

King on Talks With Mitterrand, Mideast Peace

NC2903214891 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn described today's meeting with His Excellency French President Francois Mitterrand as the most successful meeting to date. In a press statement following the meeting, his majesty added: This meeting in Paris today with a grand and dear friend, President Mitterrand, covered all problems and issues of interest to us. Naturally, this covers the entire region, in part and parcel. His majesty the king said: Personally, I believe that we will work together on all levels to achieve in the near future what we have devoted our whole life to achieving. This is because the window of hope and the available opportunity for a just and comprehensive peace in the Palestine, Arab-Israeli, and Palestinian-Israeli issues may not be there for long. Naturally, the dark, hard phase we have experienced will not be a passing and forgotten phase, but one from which we will draw lessons for the future and useful bases on which to act for the sake of the generations of the entire region. It is a future replete with hope, peace, and dignity. God willing, the hard circumstances will turn into a future much better than the past.

His majesty said: Praise be to God, the Jordanians raise their heads high. They have always defended their principles and always supported peace and the cause of peace. His majesty said: I want to declare, not for the first time, that we have always been against the occupation of other people's land by force and against annexation. This is our stand regarding the Palestine question, the Cyprus issue, and the Falklands. Naturally, this is our stand on the recent events. We have always been with peace and in favor of avoiding what did take place. We did what we could. Being successful or unsuccessful in our effort is not the criterion. We carry our heads high. The circumstances we are passing through are hard. All Jordanians in a country enjoying the blessing of freedom and democracy, however, believe in the future and have enough resolve to achieve a better future.

His Majesty King Husayn said: I have always believed that the European experience represents the road to the future for us in our region. I believe this is what should take place and what is realistic and appropriate. Therefore, we will work as partners and friends. We will try to fulfill our obligations and responsibilities toward the generations in our region and toward all people in our region and the world. I believe UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the concept of land for peace, or any other formula should all be eventually linked to UN Security Council guarantees. Therefore, convening a conference sometime is a necessity. I personally believe, however, that the time now is for calm and active diplomacy with the support of the five permanent member states and the help of goodwilled people in the world. Nevertheless, there must be a Palestinian-Israeli dimension to the conference, because without a resolution to that aspect of the problem, there will be no solution to the Palestine question. The Palestinians must be an effective party committed to the results. Also, the Arab-Israeli dimension must be dealt with. I hope that in the very near future we will witness activity and creative thinking regarding what peace really means, in the sense that it should be a durable peace that includes all those concerned. I cannot now touch on many details. I would like to say, however, that in addition to the basic components, such as Resolutions 242 and 338, land for peace, the Palestinians' legitimate rights on their national soil, and their exercise of the right to resolve this issue—a right that they must not be denied—a durable solution to the Palestine question requires the participation of us all. Of course, Jordan is a very, very important factor in this process, and it will not abandon its responsibilities and commitment to a just and durable peace. Apart from this, there have been numerous plans and ideas going around in circles over the years. We now have an opportunity. I believe the window is open. I hope that the principles that have been applied to settle problems will be the same everywhere. Lastly, I hope that all of us will realize that we should secure a kind of peace that will enable the coming generations to live under its blessing and to safegurd it.

Views International Conference, PLO

NC3003073191 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn has stated that work must start among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to try and establish, as soon as possible and in a concrete way, a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians to which all parties concerned could contribute for peace.

In an interview with French Television's Fifth Channel last night, his majesty added that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict must both converge at an international conference on the basis of UN resolutions. His majesty said that the Palestinian part of the question must be tackled by the Palestinians themselves. He added: If the Palestinians ask to join a joint delegation with us in which they have their own representatives, we will facilitate their mission.

His majesty emphasized that the PLO is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people and the party that is entitled to represent them. Any decision they take is up to them, and nobody can interfere in their affairs and impose solutions upon them, he added.

Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Arrives for Talks

NC3103122891 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 31 Mar 91 p 18

[Text] Amman—Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Hamdun arrived in Amman last night.

During his visit, Hamdun will hold talks with a number of officials.

GCC States Halt Aid to Jordan, PLO

NC3003175691 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] The Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] declared today that the GCC member states have decided to halt [waqf] financial aid to Jordan and the PLO because of their stands on the Gulf crisis. This came during a news conference held by the GCC secretary general in Kuwait today.

GCC Decision Halting Financial Aid Criticized

NC3103125291 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 31 Mar 91 pp 1, 13

[Editorial: "A Decision That Serves Israel"]

[Text] The statements by 'Abdallah Bisharah, Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] secretary general, express a policy completely lacking in wisdom, not to say a policy of blind revenge based more on tribal spirit and vengeance than on the spirit of this era and noble values.

At a time when we hoped the Arabs would be able to rise above their wounds, bitterness, and hatred, the GCC secretary general's words can only be described as a suspicious attempt to entrench hatred among the Arabs, and create hostilities among peoples.

In Jordan, we are neither sorry for our pan-Arab position nor ready to seek forgiveness from Bisharah or others. On the contrary, we feel that Bisharah and his supporters should seek our forgiveness and apologize to us for the misunderstanding that we faced despite our firm adherence to peace and the peaceful Arab solution.

Stopping aid to us as announced by Bisharah—although we are steadfast along the longest frontline with the enemy and struggle against its expansionist ambitions—will not divide us or weaken our determination to maintain our honorable pan-Arab position against the nation's enemies and their aggressive plans.

'Abdallah Bisharah knows more than others that Jordan has never begged for financial aid, nor ever waited for anyone's grace. Jordan pays a pan-Arab tax, and defends with blood and sacrifices the depth of the great homeland, not to say Arab wealth itself.

Consequently, we feel that the decision announced by the GCC secretary general is primarily aimed against the Palestine question, the PLO, and the brave Palestinian intifadah at a time when this unique phenomenon of Arab struggle has been going on for 40 months. We did not expect the stone-throwing children to be punished in this way, which lacks Arab gallantry.

If Jordan can rely on itself—which it can, as Bisharah and others know—then this decision in this form and at this time was intended to weaken the Palestinian people's cause and contain their brave intifadah. This constitutes a direct service to Israel, which is now increasing its suppressive and bloody policy to crush the intifadah and perpetuate its oppressive occupation of Jerusalem.

As we voice our disapproval of the position expressed in the GCC secretary general's statements, and note our surprise at this decision in light of the general Arab tendency to overcome the effects of the Gulf crisis, we are fully confident that this decision will only increase the Jordanians' commitment to their honorable pan-Arab position, and will only increase the Palestinians' determination to continue their glorious struggle to seize all their legitimate rights.

Foreign Minister: Hostage Issue in 'Final Stages'

NC3003061291 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has said that the issue of the 12 Western hostages held in Lebanon has reached its final stages. He added that current negotiations for their release concentrate on financial technicalities.

In an interview with UPI, Buwayz said the issue of the Western hostages has in theory reached its end, and is now a matter of bargaining. He added that the issue has taken a commercial turn and that the negotiations now concentrate on financial technicalities. He added that the kidnappers are trying to get the best price for their release.

Al-Hirawi Cites Conditions for 'Awn's Departure

NC3103064891 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] In an interview with French television's Fifth Channel, President Ilyas al-Hirawi announced that General Michel 'Awn's departure from the French Embassy in Beirut is contingent upon the return of $30 million to the Lebanese treasury.

President al-Hirawi set a second condition for 'Awn's departure: namely, to determine the status Gen. 'Awn will enjoy as a refugee in France.

Fadlallah Warns of U.S. Objectives in Iraq, Gulf

NC2903182991 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] His Eminence 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, one of Lebanon's prominent ulema, has warned of the dangers entailed in the establishment of a U.S. base in the Persian Gulf and the continued presence of U.S. forces in the region.

'Allamah Fadlallah, who was speaking during the Friday prayer rites at the Imam al-Rida Mosque in Beirut's southern suburb today, asserted that the U.S. occupation of part of Iraqi territory has political, not military, objectives. He said that the United States is currently proceeding toward the goal of imposing its hegemony and control over the entire region.

'Allamah Fadlallah added that the Americans are sending a message to the Iraqi regime that it is free to attack its people with aircraft and artillery, even with chemical weapons, under the slogan of not wanting to intervene in Iraq's internal affairs. He noted that the U.S. occupation is simultaneously working for a military coup d'etat that will give the Iraqis a nominally democratic rule but which will actually be an American rule to its very roots.

His eminence expressed solidarity with the Iraqi Muslim people's uprising and strongly condemned the Ba'thist forces' encroachment on the sanctity of the holy shrines in the most venerable al-Najaf and sacred Karbala'.

Palestinians Determined To Not Give Up Arms

NC3103070291 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Zayd Wahbah, PLO representative in Lebanon, has stated that the [Palestinian] resistance would rather give up its life than hand over its rifles. He stressed that the resistance will remain in southern Lebanon and said: No one will take from us our rifle in the south, which is aimed at the occupied territories.

Wahbah's statements came in a rally yesterday in the al-Burj al-Shamali refugee camp in Tyre on the occasion of Land Day.

Skirmishes Between PLA, Lahd Militia Reported

NC0104110091 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Intermittent skirmishes in which machine guns and rockets are being used are taking place on the Kafr Falus-Lib'a-'Ayn al-Mir axis between positions of the Popular Liberation Army [PLA]-Forces of Martyr Ma'ruf Sa'd and Lahd militiamen.

Ba'th Organization Abides by Militia Disbandment

NC3003085391 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Minister of State 'Abdallah al-Amin, regional secretary of the Ba'th Party Organization in Lebanon, has announced the party's immediate abidance by the decision to dissolve the militias.

At a news conference yesterday, al-Amin said: As of this moment, all military formations of our party have been dissolved. We place all our weapons at the state's disposal, and we hope this decision will constitute a real starting point for genuine security and effective cooperation to serve the homeland's interests.

People's Assembly Approves Damascus Declaration

NC3003181891 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1745 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Damascus, 30 Mar (SANA)—At a meeting today chaired by Speaker 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah, the People's Assembly approved and passed into law the bill on the Damascus Declaration regarding coordination and cooperation among Arab states. [passage omitted]

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' spoke at the meeting. He praised the assembly's interest in the Damascus Declaration, which is a historic achievement in the history of the Arab nation and a starting point on the road to Arab unity.

Al-Shar' said revolutionary Syria's foreign policy under the leadership of comrade struggler Hafiz al-Asad is brilliant. It will sincerely, honestly, and loyally maintain this brilliance. The Damascus Declaration came after a difficult phase which we all experienced with our minds and nerves as a result of the catastrophic crisis brought about by the head of the Iraqi regime. This crisis was aimed at undermining our existence and institutions and at shaking the very foundations of the Arab nation.

He added that the Damascus Declaration is significant in that eight Arab states took the initiative to draw up security arrangements for the Arab region emanating from the states of the region themselves.

On the occasion of Land Day, Speaker Qaddurah said: We support those who cling to their land in the Golan, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and southern Lebanon so that the land will continue to speak the Arabic language. We tell all these people that our land will continue to speak Arabic and to be attached to the motherland.

Al-Shar' on Peace, Damascus Declaration

NC3103092891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has warned Israel about its measures to intensify Zionist settlement in the occupied Arab territories and about its insistence on keeping the Golan up to now.

In an interview in the latest issue of the Egyptian magazine AL-MUSAWWAR, al-Shar' said that Israel will be the loser in the long run. He added: There is an opportunity for peace that Israel must seize, particularly since the Arab side is positive about peace and is proposing an international conference as a means to tackle all outstanding matters, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace agreements. He added: Peace cannot be achieved without Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, and if Israel does not want peace, this means that it is looking for war and that it cannot live with the international atmosphere prevailing in relations now. In other words, he added, if Israel does not accept peace now, it means it is looking for a confrontation with all Arabs and Muslims. The foreign minister added: We want a just and comprehensive peace that would restore the occupied territories and the usurped rights.

Asked about a recent report that Syria has been supplied with advanced Scud missiles, al-Shar' said: Why is there always talk about Syria? Israel has many more missiles than Syria. Everybody must know the amount of weapons Israel possesses, particularly if they are concerned about peace.

Regarding the new security arrangements outlined in the Damascus Declaration, whether Syria intends to increase its forces deployed in the Gulf, and who will be in command and in control, al-Shar' said: What the eight countries—that is the six Gulf countries, plus Egypt and Syria—agreed to in the Damascus Declaration are just general principles. The details will be discussed in future meetings among the parties to the agreement, the dates of which are yet to be determined.

Regarding the criticism of the Damascus Declaration by some parties—that it was based on charters that are already dead, such as the Joint Arab Defense Pact—al-Shar' said: Charters die for those who do not respect them. As for those who respected and still respect them, the matter is different. The Arab League charters are not dead, and the signatories to the Damascus Declaration respected them all. He added: We are the party that is most enthusiastic for the Arab League and Arab solidarity, and we have proved in practice our commitment to the Arab League Charter.

Regarding the conditions in southern Iraq and fears that an extremist regime modeled after Iran might be established, al-Shar' said: Our information confirms that Iran is not thinking of dividing Iraq. It supports the unity of Iraqi territory and views the Iraqi people as a Muslim people.

Khaddam: Syria To Withdraw From Lebanon on Time

NC2803113691 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] AL-DIYAR newspaper has cited sources close to the meeting held in Damascus yesterday between Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Ministers George Sa'adah and Roget Dib, as saying that Khaddam asserted to the two ministers that Syria will withdraw from Lebanon in accordance with the al-Ta'if accord timetable, and not a single hour later.

However, Khaddam told the two ministers, according to the same sources, that in the event other provisions of the al-Ta'if accord are not implemented, such as the appointment of deputies and dissolution of militias, and other articles that led to the extension of state authority over all the Lebanese territories, we will not be obligated to implement the provisions concerning us.

Khaddam stressed the need to disband all Lebanese militias, particularly non-Lebanese ones. He told the two

ministers that there is now an opportunity for the Lebanese to benefit from international and regional support.

Saddam Should Admit 'Full Responsibility'

NC3003103291 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0550 GMT 30 Mar 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Staying Outside the Bounds of Time, Space, and the Age," the newspaper TISHRIN asks in its editorial: How can Saddam Husayn overstep the moral lessons and return to his earlier methods of dealing with the Iraqi people and Army using the same methods of oppression, humiliation, injustice, and annihilation?

This confirms the extent of the blind hatred that seethes inside him against his people and Army, and how he took his revenge on both at the same time according to a carefully planned program. He first exterminated the Army in the mother of battles in Kuwait and then humiliated whatever was left of the Army. Now, he goes on to annihilate the people, which is what is happening now with unique ferocity.

AL-THAWRAH says that the absolute rejection, which has created total popular unanimity between the people in all their political factions, parties, and sectors on the one hand and this regime on the other—and to be specific, the head of this regime—constitutes a revolution in the form of a tumultuous popular uprising that Iraq has never known before—a revolution so deep and comprehensive that it covers every part of Iraq.

To the many questions regarding the people's rejection and condemnation of, and the impossibility of coexisting with Saddam, AL-THAWRAH concludes its editorial: Should he not learn his moral lessons—and there are many of them—and proclaim his full responsibility for this immense historic crime and give the Iraqi people the option to build their national, democratic, and pan-Arab future.

Need To End Occupation of Territories Stressed

NC2703141891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Under the headline "The Obstacle to Peace," AL-THAWRAH says: Amid the international lessening of tensions and the new world order, current efforts and moves are enjoying, for the first time, international consensus to achieve a comprehensive settlement and reach just solutions to existing crises that will guarantee security and stability on the basis of eliminating aggression and restoring the Palestinian people's legitimate rights in accordance with United Nations and UN Security Council resolutions. Stability in this region is very important to the entire world and to international security and economy.

The paper adds: In the past, these principles constituted, and in the view of Syria and all Arab masses, continue to constitute the basis and the proper and serious springboard for any quest for a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace.

The paper wonders how long the Israeli aggressor can persist in its policy of aggression. It adds that Israel must abandon the policy of obstinacy and conceit, its vacuous statements about security, its continued occupation of Arab territories, and its refusal to withdraw from any part of them under any circumstances.

AL-THAWRAH notes that history is full of lessons and that force and clinging to the occupation of territories will not guarantee for Israel the security that it claims. Without the elimination of the occupation of Arab territories and acknowledging the Palestinian people's rights there will be no peace.

Hizballah Man Denies Role in Hostage Issue

NC2803184691 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] In Damascus, Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam today received a Hizballah delegation headed by Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli. Delegation member Ibrahim al-Amin said the meeting with Khaddam dealt with recent developments in Lebanon and the situation in the south. He added: The hostage issue was not raised and we have nothing to do with that issue.

Afghanistan

Mujahidin Take Control of Khowst Province

Attempt To Seize Airport

BK3003084291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0816 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, March 30 (AFP)—The Afghan resistance, rejecting Kabul's claims that their offensive against Khowst had foundered, claimed Saturday to be advancing on the eastern city's only operative airport.

The mujahidin have overrun three posts manned by an artillery regiment defending the airport, said Najibullah Lafrai, information minister of the Peshawar-based resistance government.

He said that after a lull in the fighting of several days, the mujahidin launched a new attack Thursday night and captured the posts south of the besieged town of 40,000 on Friday.

The mujahidin, who captured Khowst's inoperative old airport last week, were concentrating all their efforts on seizing the new airport, the Khowst garrison's sole supply link to Kabul, he said.

The fighting left two mujahidin dead, Mr. Lafrai said, without giving enemy losses. The resistance fighters captured one tank, one armoured personnel carrier and three military trucks.

Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Humayun Mukammel said Friday in Kabul that governement forces had beaten back the two-week-old guerrilla offensive, the largest operation by the guerrillas so far this year.

"They are retreating," Mr. Mukammel said, adding that Khowst and its two airports were no longer threatened.

The Soviet-backed Kabul government report is "absolutely wrong," Mr. Lafrai said, adding that the mujahidin were "still holding all positions they conquered" in the two weeks of fighting.

He said the guerrillas Friday shot down one helicopter with a shoulder-fired U.S.-made Stinger missile, adding that the wreckage fell near Khowst's main market.

A jet parked at the airport was also destroyed in a guerrilla rocket attack Thursday, he said.

Resistance sources said Kabul's forces had launched a counter- offensive on Tuesday but it failed to dislodge the mujahidin.

There were contradictory reports about the control of Jaji Maidan district, 40 kilometers (25 miles) northeast of Khowst. The guerrillas' main commander, Jalaluddin Haqqani, said it was "liberated" in the first assault while some sources said it was still controlled by government militia.

The anti-communist mujahidin, who are backed primarily by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, have made repeated attempts in the past 12 years to seize Khowst, the closest government garrison to the Pakistani border.

Capture Seven Military Posts

BK3103041491 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say that the mujahidin launched a new operation against Khowst garrison and captured seven Kabul regime military posts. The mujahidin also shot down a helicopter gunship and destroyed a transport plane belonging to the Kabul regime. They claimed that the siege continues on Khowst garrison and that they continue their advance.

Meanwhile, BAKHTAR, the Kabul regime's news agency, said that General Mohammad Kabir Dalil, chairman of the Takhar state security zone, was killed in a mine explosion in Kabul on Thursday.

Government Forces Retreating

BK3103122891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1218 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, March 31 (AFP)—Afghan rebels Sunday [31 March] captured the airport in the beseiged Afghan city of Khowst, an Afghan guerrilla spokesman said here.

Najibullah Lafraie, information minister of the mujahidin government in exile, also said government forces were pulling back to the center of the strategic garrison city near the Pakistan border.

Khowst Garrison Shelled

BK3003155891 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] In Afghanistan, the mujahidin heavily shelled the besieged garrison of Khowst today. Earlier, they had captured the old and new airports of the city. Reports say that the mujahidin have moved very close to the Khowst market and they continue to advance forward. They have also contained the resistance by the Kabul regime forces. The mujahidin also captured two military posts in Faryab Province. The mujahidin attacked fortified positions of the Kabul regime near (Faridabad), which led to fierce clashes, and then they captured the military posts. In the southern province of Qandahar, the mujahidin launched rocket attacks on a mobile post of the Kabul regime, destroying the vehicle and killing four Kabul soldiers.

Government Launches Scuds

BK3103083191 Hong Kong AFP in English 0816 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, March 31 (AFP)—A Scud missile fired by the Afghan Government killed or wounded at least 80 mujahidin at a guerrilla base near the Pakistani border, guerrilla sources said Sunday.

Precise casualty figures from Saturday's attack were not available, but several sources said there were between 80 and 100 casualties.

Najibullah Lafraie, information minister of the mujahidin government-in-exile here, told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE that at least 15 people had been killed.

A Pakistani newspaper, THE NEWS, reported about 30 deaths and more than 50 wounded at the Khalil Markaz Base, situated in the Bari Sector southeast of the city of Khowst in eastern Afghanistan.

The missile, apparently fired from Kabul, reportedly hit the canteen of the base, which is commanded by Khalil ur-Rahman, the youngest brother of Commander Jalaluddin Haqqani, the chief of mujahidin operations in Khowst.

The injured were taken to Pakistani hospitals in Miram Shah and Peshawar as other Scuds fell in the area of Khowst, a city the mujahidin have pressured militarily since March 14, mujahidin sources said.

The attack followed reports that the mujahidin had captured more than 15 government positions and destroyed two transport planes and a helicopter in 48 hours of fighting.

Khowst has been the target of several failed offensives by the guerrillas since the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan two years ago, but Mr. Lafraie rejected a claim by the pro-Soviet Kabul government Friday that the mujahidin offensive had failed and that the rebels were retreating on all fronts.

He said fighting had abated for a few days last week when the mujahidin were "consolidating their gains" before launching new operations Friday around the Khowst airport and the artillery base that defends it.

Naim Majrooh, director of the Mujahidin Information Center here, said the Kabul government had sent large reinforcements to resist the mujahidin attacks on Khowst.

The Scud attack left about 100 people dead or injured, he said.

BAKHTAR, the official Afghan Government news agency, said Sunday that a letter signed by the "defenders of Khowst" had thanked President Najibullah for the government's help in protecting the region from "attacks by extremists and by Pakistan."

The Kabul government accuses Pakistan of openly participating in the fighting alongside the mujahidin, a charge Islamabad denies.

Mujahidin Forms Khowst Council

BK0104092491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0905 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, April 1 (AFP)—Afghan guerrillas who took control of the city of Khowst have set up a 23-member council charged with security and preventing looting and summary executions, a mujahidin official said Monday.

Najibullah Lafraie, the information minister of the mujahidin government-in-exile based here, told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE that the council would seek to avert any incidents and would take initial administrative measures.

Mr. Lafraie said the mujahidin were evacuating the civilian residents of Khowst to "safe areas," fearing an aerial attack by the Kabul government.

Amin Wardak, a mujahidin commander in contact with the rebels in Khowst, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the Pakistan border, said government planes had bombed the Khowst airport early Monday, causing some damage.

Mr. Lafraie said that as of 0530 GMT more than 2,200 government soldiers and militiamen were in the hands of the mujahidin and that an "impressive" amount of materiel, mostly helicopters and combat tanks, had been captured.

More than 600 government wounded were rounded up, Mr. Lafraie said, without revealing the mujahidin casualty toll.

The Afghan guerrillas said Sunday they had captured the strategic city after 17 days of bloody combat in their first significant victory since the withdrawal of Soviet troops two years ago.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sent a medical team and four ambulances to Khowst on Monday to administer first aid to the hundreds of wounded and evaluate the medical situation there, Western and rebel sources said.

A Western diplomat in Islamabad confirmed the mujahidin takeover of Khowst and said they included rebels from each of seven resistance factions.

He said they were trying to set up a civil administration there.

Since taking Khowst, the mujahidin have set up a "security belt" around the city to avoid sabotage and looting, the head of the mujahidin information center here, Naim Majrooh, said.

Government Admits Airport Lost

BK0104005891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1841 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Kabul, March 31 (AFP)—Afghan rebels fighting the Soviet-backed government of President Najibullah have taken control of the airport in the strategic city of Khowst, a senior government official here said Sunday.

The official, who asked not to be identified, admitted late Sunday that government troops were no longer in full control of Khowst.

Earlier a government spokesman here had denied the mujahidin had captured Khowst and said they had launched an offensive near the city on the border with Pakistan.

The latest official report followed a mujahidin announcement from the northern Pakistan city of Peshawar that they had taken control of Khowst after 17 days of fighting.

The official said he could not confirm that Khowst had fallen and added that fighting was still going on.

Government forces "have not surrendered," he said, but admitted that Kabul was "concerned the situation could worsen."

"The airport is now under rocket attack, preventing any aircraft from landing and bringing reinforcements."

The government, he said, was reviewing the situation and planning to send reinforcements as soon as possible.

This abrupt change in the situation in Khowst, situated 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the Pakistan border, was the consequence of direct intervention by the Pakistani army into Afghanistan with tanks and artillery, the official said.

The fall of Khowst would represent a major psychological victory for the mujahidin, who have scored no significant gains in their fight against the Kabul regime since Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan 25 months ago.

In its first evening newscast earlier Sunday, official Kabul Radio only referred to Khowst by saying that the situation there had become "serious."

"I want to inform you that the situation at Khowst has become very dangerous and complicated," the radio quoted Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil as saying in a letter to United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Mr. Wakil also accused Pakistani troops of being "directly involved" in the fighting. "Right now Pakistani forces are advancing towards Khowst," he said.

Diplomats in Kabul said they were skeptical about the allegation.

In Peshawar, Amin Wardak, a mujahidin commander, and Naim Majrooh, director of the Afghan Information Center in the city, had announced the fall of Khowst following pitched battles mainly at the airport and in a major government artillery base.

They told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE that Khowst had "completely surrendered" and that the rebels were in control of the city, its airport and bazaar.

They based their claims on radio messages from representatives of Jalaluddin Haqqani, who was commanding the offensive against the city.

One of Mr. Haqqani's aides spoke of more than 800 government troops and militiamen taken prisoner.

AFP Recaps Battle

BK0104003891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1710 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, March 31 (AFP)—Afghan rebels said they captured Khowst on Sunday after 17 days of fighting, but the government in Kabul said it was still in control of the strategic garrison city.

Amin Wardak, a rebel commander, and Naim Majrooh, director of the Afghan Information Center in Peshawar, said the city was taken after pitched battles mainly at the airport and in a major government artillery base.

They told AFP that Khowst had "completely surrendered" and that the rebels were in control of the city, its airport and bazaar.

They based their claims on radio messages from representatives of Jalaluddin Haqqani, who is commanding the offensive against Khowst, near the Afghan-Pakistan border in the east of the country.

One of Mr. Haqqani's aides spoke of more than 800 government troops and militiamen taken prisoner.

In Kabul, a spokesman for President Najibullah's Soviet-backed government acknowledged that "aggression has intensified," but said its troops still held Khowst.

In its first evening newscast Sunday, official Kabul Radio only referred to Khowst by saying that the situation there had become "serious."

"I want to inform you that the situation at Khowst has become very dangerous and complicated," the radio quoted Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil as saying in a letter to United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Mr. Wakil also accused Pakistani troops of being "directly involved" in the fighting, supporting the mujahidin with tanks and artillery, according to the radio. Dipomats in Kabul said they were skeptical about the allegation.

If the rebels' claims are correct, the fall of Khowst would be a serious blow to the government in Kabul, and the first significant victory for the mujahidin since Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan 25 months ago.

Mr. Majrooh said that after the capture of Khowst airport during the day, soldiers and militiamen retreated to the city center.

According to Mr. Wardak, there was fighting within the downtown area, notably around the hospital where, he said, "there were more than 500 wounded government soldiers."

Some hours earlier, Najibullah Lafraie, information minister of the Pakistan-based mujahidin government in exile, declared the airport had been "liberated."

Flights into the airport have been the only way government forces could bring in supplies and reinforcements, as the guerrillas have surrounded the city for several years.

Mr. Lafraie, whose government in exile groups six Sunni Moslem resistance factions based in Pakistan, has spoken since Friday of guerrilla advances on Khowst.

He also said at least 15 mujahidin were killed in a Scud missile attack Saturday on a rebel camp southeast of Khowst.

Other rebels spoke of at least 80 dead and wounded when the missile—apparently fired from Kabul—hit the Khalil camp, which is commanded by Mr. Haqqani's youngest brother.

According to Mr. Majrooh, all rebel organizations and tribes living in the Khowst region were taking part in the fighting.

He also said that fundamentalist groups, notably Hezb-e-Islami (Party of Islam), led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, were in a minority on the ground.

He did not rule out the possibility that Kabul was using its air power and long-range artillery to knock rebels out of positions they now occupy.

Dozens of Scud missiles have been fired by Kabul since the rebel offensive began March 14.

Observers say the fall of Khowst would represent a psychological victory for the resistance following gains scored by the government on the diplomatic front in the past two years.

It would also facilitate operations elsewhere in Afghanistan, particularly in terms of running guerrilla supplies from Pakistan.

Government Seeks UN Intervention in Khowst

LD3103161191 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1430 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The following message has been sent to New York today by 'Abdul Wakil, foreign affairs minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, addressed to His Excellency UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on the intensification of aggression by Pakistani army units and militia, which has further complicated the situation in Khowst Province, in continuation of his previous letters:

His Excellency UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar: The situation in Khowst Province has become further complicated as a result of aggression by Pakistan's army, commandos and militia. At the moment, the forces of Pakistan's army are approaching Khowst Province. Units and subunits of the Pakistani army directly engage in the fighting against the Armed Forces of the Republic of Afghanistan in Khowst Province. Pakistan's army has placed a considerable quantity of tanks and Stinger missiles at the disposal of the opposition extremists. Pakistan's artillery forces savagely slaughter civilians, and Pakistani transport vehicles move arms and ammunition regularly from Pakistan's soil to Khowst Province. In fact, Pakistan's army has become involved in a full-scale war against the Republic of Afghanistan in Khowst Province and continues fightings with very advanced arms and ammunition against the Republic of Afghanistan.

I want to inform your excellency that the situation is becoming very complicated and dangerous. The Republic of Afghanistan requests your immediate intervention in this issue. It is requested that your excellency, based on the responsibility you shoulder, take immediate measures to end this aggression and inform the Republic of Afghanistan on the situation. I express my wish for the good health of your excellency.

[signed] 'Abdul Wakil, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Afghanistan.

Protests to Pakistani Envoy

LD3103160191 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1430 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The charge d'affaires of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was summoned this afternoon to the Foreign Affairs Ministry. A strong protest by the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan was conveyed to him by the head of the First Political Department of that ministry, with the following text:

Pakistan's government directly carries out a completely open war in Khowst Province against the Republic of Afghanistan. At present, units of the Pakistani army, including commandos and militia from the regular army of Pakistan, are approaching Khowst Province. Pakistan's army has put tanks and Stinger missiles at the disposal of the extremist opposition groups. It supports them with artillery and missiles.

The missiles and artillery forces of Pakistan's army have resorted to savagely killing civilians in Khost. Heavy vehicles of Pakistan's army continue to move arms, ammunition, and groups of armed extremists from Pakistan's soil to Khost Province.

This shameful and dastardly aggression is of growing dimension. As protested to Pakistan's government several times, the responsibilities for the dangerous consequences of this situation will rest on Pakistan's government.

Government Alleges Pakistani Advisers in Khowst

LD3103091291 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0518 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Kabul, March 30, BAKHTAR—The officers of Pak's [Pakistan's] Inter-State Intelligence, ISI, are actively contributing with extremist groups in the conduct of attacks against Khowst Province, reports reaching BAKHTAR military section says.

Eqbal [as received], an ISI officers accompanied by 45 Pak's military advisers and 40 vehicles loaded with arms and ammunitions, had arrived on March 20, 1990 to Khowst Province. The Pak's officers and military advisers in addition to guiding the warring extremists have taken an active part in the encroachments of Khowst Province.

AFP Source Confirms Mujahidin Control of Khowst

BK0104054491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0527 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Islamabad, April 1 (AFP)—A Western diplomat confirmed here Monday that Afghan guerrillas have taken control of the eastern Afghan city of Khowst and were trying to set up a civil administration there.

Khowst, situated 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the Pakistan border, "has fallen," and "the city is in the hands of the resistance," said the diplomat, who requested anonymity.

The mujahidin who took over Khowst included rebels from each of seven factions, he added.

A senior official of the Soviet-backed government in Kabul acknowledged Sunday that the rebels had taken control of the airport in the strategic city and admitted that government troops were no longer in full control there.

The report followed a mujahidin announcement from their headquarters in the northern Pakistan city of Peshawar that they had taken control of Khowst after 17 days of fighting.

Significance of Mujahidin Khowst Victory Analyzed

BK0104113691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1028 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Islamabad, April 1 (AFP)—The fall of Khowst to the mujahidin after 17 days of fierce fighting has exposed the vulnerability of the Kabul Government in the absence of Soviet forces, western diplomats said here.

The capture of the city, located 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the Pakistani border in Afghan President Najibullah's home province of Paktia, is the resistance's "most significant" achievement since Soviet troops left Afghanistan two years ago, the diplomats said.

They said morale among the mujahidin would be boosted by the victory against Kabul's regular army, which possesses Scud missiles, tanks and armoured vehicles.

"We will now move towards Gardez," said Jalaluddin Haqqani, who Sunday led the mujahidin forces to the victory.

Gardez, capital city of Paktia province, is considered a staging point for Afghan government forces in the area. Some 70 kilometers from Khowst on a circuitous highway, Gardez abuts Logar province, most of which is already under mujahidin control.

The capture of Khowst by the mujahidin could open the way to Kabul. The first garrison city across the border from Pakistan, Khowst has defied successive mujahidin offensives in the past 12 years.

For a decade after their 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, Soviet troops often had to come to the rescue of Kabul's forces in the town.

"The Kabul regime itself has made it a test of the mujahidin's strength," Najibullah Lafraie, information minister of the resistance's exiled government based in Peshawar said, referring to the massive fortification of the town by Kabul and the Soviets.

"They had piled up so much in Khowst that it had surpassed in importance other places in Afghanistan," he said citing underground bunkers where the troops were entrenched.

Since the Soviet forces left Afghanistan, the mujahidin have tried in vain to capture several cities including Jalalabad and Kandahar in the east of the country.

"The mujahidin had become prisoners of a stalemate, which has now been broken," Mr. Lafraie said.

Internal bickering and successive failures in recent years had apparently dismayed their backers, which was also reflected in a shift in the U.S. policy advising a political settlement rather than a military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

"The achievement in Khowst will strengthen the resistance's hands in any future negotiations," a diplomat said.

He said the mujahidin were now trying to set up a civilian administration in the city with the help of local tribes who played a crucial role in its fall.

The capture is seen as a blow to Mr. Najibullah, who, confident of his own stability, had mounted a diplomatic offensive for a compromise settlement of the Afghan crisis amid a decline in western assistance to the resistance, analysts said.

Another westerner said he was "impressed" that the guerrillas shielded hospitals and evacuated wounded soldiers from Khowst as there had been fears that captured troops would be executed.

The mujahidin had dispatched a group of elders to Khowst to negotiate a surrender but the talks reported broke down over the issue of troops in the city retaining their light arms.

Mujahidin forces abandoned their usual guerrilla tactics to mount systematic and coordinated attacks on the city since March 14.

While the government failed to regain lost positions, the guerrillas, commanded by a 23-member council, consolidated their gains for four days last week before launching a decisive assault on Khowst airport Sunday.

The disarray in the Kabul Army ranks was reflected in a series of letters Afghan Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil wrote to the U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar blaming Pakistan for the attack, Afghan sources said.

They also cited Kabul radio's warnings to soldiers against any surrender punctuated by patriotic songs.

Both Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials and diplomats in Kabul and Islamabad dismissed allegations that Pakistani troops were directly involved in the battle for Khowst.

The allegations were not new, a Foreign Ministry official in Islamabad said adding that "they malign Pakistan whenever mujahidin pressure increases."

Resistance sources said that Kabul had adopted a scorched earth policy in Khowst, with bombers destroying planes and equipment left behind by retreating Afghan soldiers.

Bangladesh

Commission Finds Evidence of Ershad Abuses

BK3103160091 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The three-member inquiry commission, which was set up to investigate the allegations of corruption, malpractices and misuse of powers against former President Ershad and some of his ministers, presented the first part of the report to the acting president, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, in Dhaka today. The commission, headed by Mr. Justice G.M. Ansaruddin Ahmed, in its first part report said it had examined 53 allegations against them so far and found a sufficient prima facie evidence in respect of 42 allegations. The commission is continuing its work for completion of the remaining task. The commission has expressed the view that the report should be published for general information. The acting president thanked the members of the commission for working very hard to prepare the report.

India's Dubey Arrives With Shekhar Message

BK3003160691 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Indian Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey arrived in Dhaka this afternoon as a special envoy of Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar. The envoy will call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tomorrow to give her a message from Mr. Chandra Shekhar. Talking to newsmen at the airport, Mr. Dubey said his present mission is not aimed at finding out solution to all bilateral problems. He, however, said he would review different aspects of bilateral issues during talks with officials in Dhaka.

The Indian foreign secretary expressed happiness to come to Bangladesh when an epic struggle has culminated into establishing a democratic government. India, he said, salutes the success of the people of Bangladesh and attaches great importance to his country's relationship with Dhaka. Mr. Dubey is the first foreign dignitary to visit Bangladesh after democratically elected government was formed here. Mr. Dubey will also meet Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman; Irrigation, Water Development, and Flood Control Minister Majedul Haq; and leader of the opposition in parliament, Sheikh Hasina. The Indian foreign secretary will hold talks with his counterpart Abul Ahsan tomorrow morning.

Meets Begum Zia

BK3103132891 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed the hope that a new era of friendship and cooperation would begin with India on the basis of resolving all outstanding problems. She was talking to Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's personal envoy Muchkund Dubey in Dhaka today. Mr. Dubey handed over a personal message from the Indian prime minister to Begum Khaleda Zia.

The Indian premier, in his message, said his country would like to work with Bangladesh to establish mutually beneficial relationship to resolve all outstanding issues and to enter into a dialogue at (?all levels). Mr. Chandra Shekhar also expressed the hope about an early opportunity to meet Begum Zia for this purpose.

The Bangladesh prime minister emphasized the need for an early settlement to the issue of sharing of the Ganges water and said that the people of northern region of the country are facing acute problem because of the onset of lean period. She also underlined the need for transferring the Tin Bigha Corridor to Bangladesh, which was, she said, a long-standing problem.

The Indian special envoy, Dubey, mentioned several initiatives taken by the late president, Ziaur Rahman, to expand the growing cooperation between the two countries. He also referred to President Zia's idea about SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] which is now a reality.

Begum Zia said her government would pursue the policy followed by President Zia and like to continue to establish and strengthen cooperation between Bangladesh and India. The prime minister said she was looking forward to an opportunity to meet the Indian prime minister and other leaders at an appropriate time.

Meets Other Officials

BK3103162091 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Khaleda Zia says a new era of friendship and cooperation with India could begin on the basis of resolving all outstanding problems. Begum Zia was talking to Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's special envoy Muchkund Dubey in Dhaka today. He handed over to her a personal message from the Indian prime minister. Indian Foreign Secretary Dubey arrived in the capital yesterday on a two-day visit. [passage omitted]

Earlier, the Indian special envoy called on Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman. The foreign minister reiterated the intention of the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government to strengthen relations with India. He also pointed out several outstanding problems, especially Tin Bigha, Ganges water sharing, and Chakma refugee problems.

Mr. Muchkund Dubey later met his counterpart Abul Ahsan. They discussed bilateral and international issues of common concern. The postwar Gulf situation, the implication of U.S.-Soviet relationship and its effect on diminishing cold war and nonaligned and South Asian countries were also discussed.

The Indian special envoy also made a courtesy call on Awami League chief and leader of the opposition in parliament, Sheikh Hasina. They exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

Mr. Dubey later left for New Delhi. Prior to his departure, he told newsmen at Zia International Airport that Bangladesh and India would hold a secretary-level meeting on the 23d of next month on distribution of Ganges water.

Bangladesh is to export 10,000 tonnes of molasses to India under an agreement signed in Dhaka today. More agreements are to be signed soon to export another 10,000 tonnes of molasses to India and 20,000 tonnes to EEC countries.

PRC Foreign Minister Welcomes New Cabinet

BK3003133891 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen says that China is happy that a new cabinet headed by Begum Khaleda Zia has been formed in Bangladesh. Mr. Qian was addressing a dinner hosted by Bangladeshi Ambassador Farooq Subhan in observance of the country's 20th anniversary of independence and national day in Beijing. He expressed the confidence that Sino-Bangladeshi friendship and cooperation will develop further with new dimensions under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The Chinese foreign minister said China and Bangladesh are good neighbors and had enjoyed profound tradition of friendship since the establishment of diplomatic relations between them on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Farooq Subhan said that Bangladesh enjoyed special relations with China which is one of Bangladesh's close friends. The dinner was attended among others by Chinese senior Foreign Minister Qi Huaiyuan, former Vice Foreign Minister Liu Shuqing, and Deputy Head of International Liaison Department of the Communist Party Jiang Guanghua.

28 BNP-Sponsored Women Win Seats Uncontested

BK3003161691 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Excerpts] All the 30 candidates who filed nomination papers for election to the 30 reserved seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad [parliament] have been declared elected uncontested. According to the schedule announced earlier by the Election Commission, today was the day for filing and scrutiny of nomination papers. Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat, who is also the returning officer, received the nomination papers today. Thirty candidates—one for each of the 30 womens seats—filed their nomination papers. Scrutiny of the nomination papers was held by the returning officer this afternoon. Nominations of all the 30 candidates were found valid after scrutiny. The returning officer, in pursuance of Article 11 of the Representation of the People Seats for Women Members Order of 1973, declared all the 30 candidates elected uncontested. [passage omitted]

The Election Commission says of the 30 elected women members, the nominations of Begum Rashida Khatoon and Hafiza Asmah Khatoon were proposed and seconded by the Jamaat-i-Islami members of parliament. The nominations of the other 28 members were proposed and seconded by the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] members of the Jatiya Sangsad.

Begum Zia Gains Absolute Majority

BK3103131291 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The newly elected women members of the Jatiya Sangsad [parliament] will take oath on Monday. All the 30 women members have been elected uncontested for the seats reserved for them.

The strength of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party—BNP—headed by Prime Minister Begum Zia in the present 320-member Jatiya Sangsad has now risen to 164. With this, the party has got absolute majority in the parliament.

India

Chandra Shekhar Discusses Punjab, Haryana

BK3103091591 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, has said holding of elections in Punjab will depend upon the situation in the state in the next few months. Speaking at a Meet the Press program in Chandigarh this morning, he said the government is however very keen to hold early elections and is constantly in touch with the state government in this regard. He said the whole situation in the state has been continuously improving for the last few months barring some stray incidents.

On the alleged curbs on the press in Punjab and Chandigarh, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said he is against any curbs. At the same time, no newspaper can be allowed to become the advertiser of militancy or a medium for achieving militant ends. He said the country is passing through a difficult period and the government has to take some unpleasant steps sometimes under compulsion.

In reply to a question on the suggestion of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann that militants could be involved in finding a solution to the Punjab problem, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said two or three groups claiming to be militants have talked to him and their approach seems to be quite

constructive. However, the recent political developments in the country have given a setback to these efforts.

About the latest political developments in Haryana following the chief minister's recommendation for the dissolution of the state assembly and the governor's directive to Mr. Om Prakash Chautala to prove his majority in the house, the prime minister said the governor's report will receive due respect and consideration. He denied that he is in any way helping Mr. Chautala.

Earlier, talking to newsmen at Balia in Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Chandra Shekhar appealed to leaders of all political parties not to make inflammatory speeches during the election campaign. Answering a question about large-scale circulation of cassettes of provocative speeches, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said no ban can be effective. But he appealed to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders to exercise restraint. He expressed his distress over the recent disturbances in Saharanpur.

On Punjab, he said some progress has been made to solve the problem. But the process may be hampered because of the elections. Mr. Chandra Shekhar ruled out the possibility of Janata Dal-S having a poll alliance with the Janata Dal. He said his party has not received any such proposal from the Janata Dal, nor does it appear likely. On the question of a poll alliance with the Congress-I, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said there is no such offer from that party. But he said any Janata Dal-S leader is free to meet leaders of other parties.

32 'Terrorists' Surrender In Tripura

BK2903161391 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] In Tripura, 32 terrorists surrendered before the chief minister, Mr. Sudhir Ranjan Majumdar, in South Tripura District this evening. Quoting police sources, our Agartala correspondent reports that the surrendered terrorists also deposited arms and ammunition.

Orissa Town Under Curfew; BJP Condemns Violence

BK2903161891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] In Orissa, indefinite curfew has been clamped in (Soro) Town of Balasore District as a precautionary measure following incidents of arson and looting yesterday. Thirty people have been taken into custody. The curfew also continues in Bhadrakh Town, which was hit by disturbances on Sunday last. Meanwhile, the state government has decided to pay an ex-gratia amount of 25,000 rupees each to the next of kin of those killed in the recent disturbances in the state. The announcement was made by the state chief minister, Mr. Biju Patnaik, in Bhubaneswar today. He was talking to newsmen soon after his return from a visit to the affected areas. He described the situation as quiet and fast returning to normal.

The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] has condemned the recent violent incidents in Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad [World Hindu Council] has urged the president to order an inquiry into the violence in Bhadrakh.

Deaths Reported in Kashmir; 'Subversives' Arrested

BK2903161191 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] In Kashmir Valley, six persons, including a terrorist, were killed in separate incidents during the last 24 hours. According to an official release, the terrorist was killed in a cross-firing in Anantnag District.

Meanwhile, security forces have arrested seven more subversives and recovered some arms and ammunition from different parts of the valley.

Security Forces Kill 'Dreaded' Militant in Punjab

BK3103125691 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] In Punjab, a dreaded militant, Major Singh Katrakalan, was gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Ropar District last night. He was responsible for mass killings including 29 workers of a Ropar factory early this month. He carried a reward of 10 lakh rupees on his head.

162 Assam 'Militants' Surrender With Arms

BK3103161691 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] In Assam, a group of 162 ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam] activists, including 89 trained militants, today surrendered along with their arms before the governor, Mr. Lok Nath Mishra, at Dhulahat village in Lakhimpur District. Those surrendered included four area presidents and three secretaries. This is for the first time when an ULFA group has come overground to surrender after the declaration of the organization as unlawful. Speaking on the occasion, the governor expressed happiness over their voluntary decision to surrender. He hoped that other such misguided youths will also join the mainstream.

Sikh Leader Mann Urges U.S. Role in Punjab

BK3003093691 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 14 Mar 91 p 7

[Text] Chandigarh, March 13—Akali leader Simranjit Singh Mann today expressed the hope that the US would directly intervene and liberate Sikhs from the yoke of Hindu imperialism as it had done to liberate Kuwait.

"Since we had extended full moral support to the US and Allied campaign in the Gulf region, it would be good for the United States to directly intervene", he told newsmen here.

Mr Mann did not share the US directive to Pakistan to stop aiding and abetting the militants in Punjab and Kashmir.

Mr Mann, who released a protest letter from some sarpanches [headmen] of villages in Amritsar said that the Army officers have been summoning and insulting the Sikhs in the border areas. He said that if the current situation continued, the Sikhs will have the right to seek refugee status in Pakistan and that country would be dutybound to extend that status under UN Charter on refugee. He said India has extended some facility to the refugees from Tibet and Bangladesh for a long time.

Mr Mann was upset at the way the State was being governed and the way the Indian Parliament whom he described as dominated by Hindus, had denied Punjab any democracy. "We are being treated as a colony. We produce maximum for the country, but see how we are treated like slaves", he said.

Mr Mann said that Indian leaders now busy in the petty powergame were only helping the country to get truncated. "By this logic, Punjab shall be soon free and so will be other regions and States. We shall not tolerate this imperialist yoke any more. All Akali leaders are united on the issue of a sovereign Sikh State. They include Mr Parkash Singh Badal, Mr Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Mr Tota Singh and others. You could upcheck with them", he said.

He said next programme of action would be announced by him on April 13 at Damdama Sahib.

The sarpanches of various tehsils [revenue areas] of Amritsar district in a signed statement said, "the residents of border area are ever willing to cooperate with the Government. None out of us has any connection whatsoever with anti-national elements. We live in peace and strive to let others in peace".

Election Code Bans Incumbents' Misuse of Office

BK2903161591 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] The Election Commission has banned the grant of payments from discretionary funds by ministers of the central and state governments. The ban is a part of the commission's special instructions to political parties in power on the eve of the elections. The ban also forms part of the model code of conduct. The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, told newsmen in New Delhi today that the commission has written to the states requesting them to adhere to the instructions strictly. He also clarified that these instructions have come into force on Monday last.

Mr. Seshan said the code of conduct for political parties in power at the center and the states will be in force from the second of next month. The code lays down that ministers should not misuse their official position for furthering their election prospects. The code urges the ministers not to combine their official visits with electioneering or use official vehicles for election work. It urges the ministers and other authorities not to lay foundation stones for new projects or promise welfare schemes. The main guideline of the code relating to the general conduct of political parties and candidates will come into effect on the day of announcement of election schedule expected any time around the 15th of next month.

The chief election commissioner said that the Punjab chief secretary, Mr. Tajinder Khanna, met him in the capital this evening to discuss the election preparedness in the state. He said he would be visiting Chandigarh next week to review poll arrangements for Punjab, Haryana, and the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Mr. Seshan is visiting Patna tomorrow to review poll arrangements. He will also discuss the preelection transfers ordered by the [Bihar] state government.

Minister on Improved Punjab, Kashmir Situation

BK0104094091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] The minister of state for home and information and broadcasting, Mr. Subodh Kant, has said that chances for holding elections in Punjab have brightened with the improvement in the situation. Talking to a news agency in Ranchi, the minister said that measures taken by the center to curb terrorism have yielded better results in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. About Assam, Mr. Subodh Kant expressed the hope that with the surrender of over 150 ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam] activists, the situation in the state will further improve. Referring to polls in Bihar, he said the state is expected to give to the center the security requirements for holding fair and free elections. Mr. Subodh Kant appealed to all political parties in the country to work unitedly for instilling confidence among the masses in sensitive states.

Iran

Security Council Session Discusses Iraq

LD3003164491 Tehran IRNA in English 1616 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 30, IRNA—The Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) reviewed regional developments, including the crisis in Iraq in a meeting here tonight.

The council presided over by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed serious concern over the barbaric massacre of the Iraqi people and the resultant destructions, particularly the pressures exerted on the Grand Ayatollah Abolqasem Kho'i and other ulema in Iraq.

It urged international efforts for helping the Iraqi people, and preventing their further massacre, and stressed the need for the establishment of peace in the Persian Gulf region.

The damages inflicted on Iran during the eight-year imposed war, and recent clashes in Kuwati were also discussed by the Council, which also reiterated the need for the vindication of the rights of the Iranian nation.

President Concerned Over Kho'i House Arrest

LD3003155291 Tehran IRNA in English 1421 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 30 IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani today voiced his concern over the desecration of holy shrines and theological seminaries in Iraq, and the insult to the Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Abolqasem Kho'i by the Iraqi regime.

The president, in a meeting with Abdu-Saheb Kho'i, the son of the 95-year-old grand ayatollah, hoped that the difficulties of the Iraqi people would soon be over.

Saheb Kho'i briefed Hojjat-ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani on the physical and mental situation of his father and other relatives being held by the Iraqi regime.

The two sides called for the lifting of the house arrest of the grand ayatollah, and the release of his family members and associates languishing in Baghdad jails.

The grand ayatollah was kidnapped by Iraqi forces on March 20 and forced to appear on Baghdad TV, a move which shocked the world, prompting the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayataollah 'Ali Khamene'i, to issue a strongly worded statement.

Delegation to Iraq Considered

LD3103174591 Tehran IRNA in English 1620 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 31, IRNA—The Foreign Ministry has called for the dispatch of an Iranian delegation to Iraq to meet Grand Ayatollah Abolqasem Kho'i and to inquire about his health conditions and that of other 'ulema of the theological seminar in the holy city of Najaf.

Iraqi charge d'affaires to Tehran Fakhri Hamoud al-Dulaimi was summoned on Sunday to the Foreign Ministry to hear of Iran's demand by Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and Consular Affairs Mojtaba Mirmahdi.

Mirmahdi also protested to the Iraqi diplomat the Baghdad government's mistreatment of Iranian nationals in Iraq "particularly Grand Ayatollah Kho'i" and other ulema.

He also voiced the Iranian Government's support for the "interests and rights" of its nationals residing in Iraq, according to international regulations such as the Vienna conventions.

President Praises Islamic Revolution Committees

LD3103130591 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] On the eve of 1 April and the anniversary of the auspicious birth of His Holines Imam Hassan Mojtaba, peace be upon him, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the president, in a meeting with the commanders of the Islamic Revolution Committees that occured yesterday [later in the news bulletin the announcer corrects the day of this meeting to Sunday, 31 March], praised the proud resume of the devoted children of the revolution in their struggle against the merchants of death and the society's vices and iterated: with the merging of security forces and the unity of the said forces, an atmosphere of kindness and tranquillity will prevail. We will witness the unity and friendship of different forces. The president said: The Islamic Revolution Committee is a forward-looking, revolutionary organization. As soon as the revolution was born, a group of children of the revolution and caring people who knew that we would suffer from a security vacuum, without receiving orders from anyone or receiving a promise of support from anyone, took actions from the mosques through the national and religious duty that they felt. The trustworthy security point for the officials of the revolution were the forces of the Islamic Revolution Committees.

The president lauded the confrontation of committee officials against the problem of the society's vices and iterated: Naturally, confronting corruption and libertinism in society leads to opposition from the supporters of debauchery and fornication. This corrupt group has tried to spread rumors and create pessimism.

The president also spoke of the services of the Islamic Revolution Committees in the struggle against the ringleaders of the shah's regime, and the destruction of counterrevolutionary groups and added: The revolutionary committee forces, side by side with the Guard and other revolutionary forces, had a pivotal role in the removal of this malignant tumor. They were defeated despite receiving arms and equipment from world arrogance and Taqut [reference to the shah's regime].

Pointing to the discovery and destruction of narcotics networks by the forces of the Islamic Revolution Committees, Mr. Hashemi- Rafsanjani said: The day that the activities against narcotics rings started, no one thought so much force and activity would be needed. As we approached the field of struggle, we discovered the depth of the movement. One day, the world will realize the greateness of your work. The president added: The past period of the activities of the Islamic Revolution Committees was a pround period and the future will remain the same. The committee forces—who are firm, hezbolahi, fair, and the propagators of virtue and prohibitors of vice—continue to be the officials in charge of the fight against the society's vices.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed the hope that the merging and unity of security forces, talents, resources, and forces can be used in a better way in serving the community and that duplicated facilities that the people pay a heavy price for are used in a more worthy manner. The president pointed to Imam Khomeyni's, may he be admitted to God's paradise, underscoring of the importance of the merging of forces and said: The merging of security foces, as recognized by his eminence the imam, the esteemed leader, the officials of the nation, and those who care for the revolution, was a necessity.

The president stressed the need for the abolition of rank in all the forces of the Islamic Revolution Committee

and said: Those who are more deserving must be recognized by the society. The issue of reward and punihsment exists in all faiths. The society's upward trend is propagated more through the worthiness of persons.

According to the Central News Unit, during the meeting Mr. 'Abdollah Nuri, the interior minister, and Mr. Mokhtar Kalantari, the commander in chief of the Islamic Revolution Committees, gave seperate reports to the president with regard to the past activities and the future programs of that force.

Yazdi, Meshkini Friday Sermons Discuss Iraq

Yazdi Sermon

LD2903152491 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1152 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Second Friday prayers sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi at Tehran University on 29 March—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted] 12th of Farvardin [1 April] is the birth anniversary of the system of the Islamic Republic which is praised and revered by all of us. This young, youthful system which is 12 years old, but has the maturity of a 40-year old, a developed system that can govern itself well; that can easily discern friend from foe, that, in its encounters with friends and foes can make good judgements and act accordingly, such a system must obviously be praised and respected by us, and we will, naturally, all take part in the ceremonies to mark the occasion. [crowd chants support]

The events taking place in the neighboring country of Iraq are a cause for anxiety and unhappiness to all the world's Muslims. The severe pressure which is being brought by the Ba'th government on all the people; the merciless killing of innocent people, women, children, elderly people, youngsters, young, old, everyone, using the most brutal methods, using equipment which is not normally used for the suppression of domestic rebellion but which is being used there, incendiary devices, suffocating gases, heavy weaponry up to tanks, shells, and other special means of which you are all aware—this is really a cause for anxiety for everyone.

A country which, because of an unthinking government, has, in my view, been turned into a ruin; and the allies set all that country's resources ablaze; and if anything has remained, it is being set ablaze by the government in the course of the domestic movement. What kind of policy is that? What design?

The people of that country are tired and fed up of those policies. They acted to rescue themselves. They began, took action, and are taking action. And since the first days, Iran's counter revolutionary hypocrites [Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] cried out a lot and tried to use these events to say that Iran is interfering in those matters. Well, that was not unexpected. It is obvious that the hypocrites who are breathing their final breaths, are losing their last hideouts, and are nearly finished, will use every opportunity and every issue against the Islamic Republic. Here, too, they started to spread baseless allegations that Iran was and is interfering in those developments. Unfortunately, it is has recently been seen that some Iraqi leaders and officials, whether at the United Nations or inside Iraq, repeat those allegations with various interpretations. Whereas the world knows that the main policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran—which is in the text of our Constitution and which is affirmed in all Iran's laws—is noninterference in the affairs of others. The Islamic Republic of Iran has not interfered and is not interfering in any way in the domestic events in Iraq and it will not do so. [crowd chants support]

We have always maintained, and will maintain and put into practice this principle. In such issues we tell others as well that they should not interfere. We do not interfere ourselves and tell others not to do so as well. We are quite vigilant toward the events of the region, because they are related to the fate of the security of the region and us. If we accept some refugees.... [sentence incomplete as heard] Did we not do the same thing during the allies' war against Iraq? Many of the Iraqi people sought refuge with us. It is the honor and nobility of the system that we give asylum to tyrannized people who are fleeing from war. We did so then and we do the same now. Of course now it is because the pressure is higher, especially in the areas that are closer to our border. Well, a larger number of people come to our borders. Naturally we give them refuge. [passage omitted]

Therefore, as one of the people of this country, and as the person responsible for the judicial system of the country, within the limits of my knowledge of our public opinion, I advise the Iraqi ruling group that one cannot govern by bayonet, one cannot govern by force and pressure, nor by slaughtering the people. Come, respect your people. Respect their wishes. Listen to their words. Let the people be involved in the government themselves. Give them the government they want. This is our public opinion's demand and our recommendation to you. On the day that you aggressed against Kuwait we also advised you that it was a mistake and that you should not have embarked on it. We told you to withdraw as soon as possible. During the stages of the war we advised you, but you paid no heed to our advice. Today also we offer you advice. These are divine recommendations emanating from the school of Islam. [crowd chants "God is great," and other slogans] Come, desist from these crimes and respect your people.

My time is up, but I've got one or two other issues which I will tell you about more precisely.

These days there is talk about the preparation of a UN Security Council resolution concerning war reparations. I would like to tell international circles, especially the UN Security Council, that double standards with respect to legal issues will reduce the credibility of your organization even more. If some people caused war, if they caused damages in a country, and today it is being

forecast that they should pay for these damages.... [sentence incomplete as heard] There is no difference between Kuwait and Iran. Iraq invaded Kuwait and then it got out. Today there is talk of war reparations: Iraq invaded Iran in the same way. It imposed 8 years of war on us, it caused a great deal of damage. Today there is talk of paying war reparations. You, the United Nations, look at Kuwait in a certain light and you look at Iran in a different light. This shows that you are not without ulterior motives. This shows that you are after your own, it shows that you do not view the rights of the people equally, it shows that you do not view peoples in the same light. If you do look at peoples in the same light, why should not the people of Iran receive reparations for the damages that were imposed on Iran? In the preparation of these resolutions concerning the payment of reparations, as was described in UNSC Resolution 598.... [sentence incomplete as heard] If we have not talked about this particular article of Resolution 598 these few days, it does not mean that we have put the issue aside. These days across the world, in international decisionmaking circles, the issue is seriously on the agenda, but there is no talk of Iran. I don't know how to talk to these gentlemen, these gentlemen who talk about human rights, the rights of the people, and the rights of governments.

Unfortunately, there is no time to examine the issue. In the first few days, there were UNSC sessions every day, there were resolutions every day. Nowadays when the oppressed people of Iraq are being hit and suppressed contrary to all laws.... [sentence incomplete as heard] The suppression of internal demonstrations and internal revolutions are also covered by laws and systems, just as wars have laws and systems. If someone breaks the laws of war, they are put on trial as a war criminal and confronted. If someone breaks the laws concerning the suppression of internal demonstrations of their own people, that person is a traitor and cannot govern the people. I don't know why there is talk, discussions, and resolutions everyday concerning other issues but here there is no talk of rights whatsoever.

Although I don't have much time, I will refer to that Sunni brother scholar [not further identified], a Friday prayer imam of a country that has many Muslims but the government is secular. I advise that gentleman Friday imam, as the interim Friday imam of Tehran I tell that gentleman—and the author of that Arabic journal who more or less speaks the same tongue—that if you do not have enough information, there is no reason for you to interfere in political affairs, to tell lies and then expose your relations with the Iraqi embassy in your own talks. Then you connect the trends and events occuring today in Baghdad, in al-Najaf, in Karbala'—the bad actions that the Iraqi Government has taken, the desecration of holy shrines, the kidnap of great sources of emulation [reference to Ayatollah Kho'i], the massacre of the people—you connect all this to an issue that occurred a thousand years ago.

Mr. Friday imam in that country, if you had enough information, you would have known who set fire to the library of the late Shaykh Tusi, may be be admitted to God's paradise. The same people who treat al-Najaf and Karbala' today in the same way. At least improve your knowledge. Please, all those who want to enter these issues, my last word, my last advice to all these people is that those days are over, those days of using the subject of differences between Shiite and Sunni to start bloody wars among Muslims are over. Today, the talk is of Islam and the enemies of Islam. Today the enemies of Islam are confronting Islam. The issue of Shiite or Sunni is not on the agenda. Talking about Shiite and Sunni, talking about the events in Baghdad a thousand years ago, what have they got to do with the issues? What we are saying today is that the Ba'th government has done wrong to confront the high-ranking Shiite source of emulation in such a way. It has done wrong in not respecting the holy shrines, wrong in confronting the people in such a way. What do these have in common with other issues?

We tell the Palestinian brothers, the Palestinian strugglers, as we have told them before, be sure that in the end of this struggle, right will prevail. You will surely be rulers. We hope that you continue your struggle in the same way. These trends that have eclipsed the Palestinian issue to a certain extent will pass away and the issue of Palestine must remain alive—especially during the last week of Ramadan—it must become more alive so that the path to the destination is cleared. [passage omitted]

Meshkini Sermon

LD2903212291 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 1617 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Second Friday prayers sermon by 'Ali Meshkini, Friday imam of Qom, in Qom on 29 March—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted]

An important issue which I feel obliged to briefly mention concerns our Iraqi brothers. The situation in Iraq is at present extremely distressing. At present, Iraq is a country in a state of chaos. A bullying, ruthless, and tyrannical government has proven its tyrannical and despotic nature to the world during its 20 years in power. A government devoid of any morality of conscience is decimating its own nation, killing its people all over the place, and in various instances it has deployed chemical bombs and everything else available. The weapons are in Saddam's hands and in the hands of his soldiers, while the people are empty-handed. We beseech the Almighty... [changes thought] I have some information in this connection which, despite my inability to speak properly [he is fasting for Ramadan], I bring to your attention. However, I should first mention that America and its allies had previously barred Iraq from deploying bomber and fighter aircraft, saying that it could only use helicopters for the purpose of carrying food and not for carrying weapons. But the moment the United States learned that the popular forces were fighting Saddam, it granted the Iraqi regime permission, saying, it does not

matter, Saddam is permitted to use fighter aircraft and helicopter gunships, and what he does to his nation is of no importance, so long as no harm is done to our soldiers. [crowd chants "Death to America, death to Saddam"] God willing, I hope it will be so; I hope your slogans will be realized. My purpose in saying that was to point out that a government which has constantly alleged throughout the world that it is the upholder of human rights and the supporter of human rights, in doing so is providing the world with the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they are supporters of human rights, or the most terrorist of all terrorists.

I have received a little information which I will present to you:

First, the morale of the Iraqi Army and military is extremely low and defeated. They have lost their courage. They are witnessing a nationwide popular uprising against them. They have lost their courage, which is a sign of defeat. A state of fear has taken hold of them. That is the first point.

As for the people, their morale is extremely high, praise be to God. The prople of Iraq in spite of the killings are in excellent form, and continue to resist the enemies.

Another point is that in Baghdad guards are constantly patrolling the city. The whole of Baghdad is under siege. The whole of Baghdad is under curfew. The guards interrogate any two persons talking to each other. That is the situation in Baghdad.

In the holy al-Najaf, the immaculate shrine, the dome and the divine shrine of the Lord of the Monotheists 'Ali, may God's benedictions be upon him, has been violated and desecrated. The corpses are scattered in the streets, and some have even become prey to the beasts.

His Eminence the Grand Ayatollah Kho'i is currently kept under heavy guard and tight security. As for the followers of his eminenence, some have been incarcerated and the whereabouts of the rest are not known; perhaps they have met the same fate as the offspring of the Grand Ayatollah Hakim [head of Supreme Assembly Islamic Republic of Iraq] No one knows.

The north of Iraq is still in the hands of the popular forces, praise be to God. The situation in northern Iraq is good, and the condition of the people is normal and Saddam has no chance of gaining victory over them.

An even more significant and amazing issue, however, concerns the monafeqin [hypocrites—the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization]; those who staged an uprising in Iran under the banner of: God prefers the mojahedin [previous phrase in Arabic: Fadhal-al Allah al-Mojahedin]. Those who left Iran for a while took refuge in Paris; from there they left for Iraq, and now that the climate has changed, the monafeqin have in some areas embarked on a series of operations against the Iraqi people. They are killing the Iraqi people to assist and defend Saddam's regime. Look at the way fate plays with the lives of human beings. However, praise be to God, they were crushed by the Iraqi popular forces; a number of them were killed while another group were taken captive. [passage omitted]

Yazdi Welcomes Investigation of Iraqi War Crimes

LD3103192391 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Excerpts] A meeting of officials of the Judicial Branch was held this morning chaired by Mr. Yazdi, the head of the judiciary.

During the meeting, the head of the judiciary made some remarks referring to the day of God, 1 April, the Islamic Republic Day. He said: On that great day, the system of the Islamic Republic was established in Iran with 98.2 percent of the people's votes. Today, after 12 years, this system has shown a very high level of growth and that it is capable of managing the country's affairs without relying on other forces. [passage omitted]

The head of the judiciary and member of the Supreme National Security Council referred to the mission of a committee set up at the request of the head of the U.S. Justice Department to investigate the Iraqi regime's war crimes and to gather the necessary records and documents, and said: This is an action which the Islamic Republic of Iran called on the world to take during the 8 years of war which was imposed on Iran and also what officials of the system have repeatedly called for. These kinds of actions should have been taken earlier on. We are pleased today that the world is slowly realizing the issues pointed out by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and is investigating the correct issues in a manner which the Islamic Republic of Iran has been calling for.

Mr. Yazdi expressed the hope that the action will be taken in a wider spectrum and that the result will be investigated by a special international court.

Interference in Iraqi Affairs 'Strongly' Denied

LD3103212291 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] A Foreign Ministry spokesman has once again strongly denied the allegation made by some Iraqi officials pertaining to the Islamic Republic of Iran's interference in the internal affairs of Iraq.

Mr. Morteza Sarmadi, in an interview with our correspondents, said: The government of Iraq, instead of resorting to false allegations and accusing Iran, which does nothing but create a poisonous atmosphere in the recently established relations between the two countries, would be better served by resolving its internal problems by getting closer to the people, realistically, and with foresight.

Iraqi 'Crimes' Condemned on Islamic Republic Day

NC0104054591 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Today, 12 Farvardin [1 April], is the anniversary of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It will be marked throughout the country in tandem with the auspicious birthday of Imam Hasan Mojtaba, peace be upon him.

The Islamic Propaganda Coordination Council yesterday issued a statement calling for the wide and united presence of the Muslim Iranian nation in these ceremonies during which they will express their sympathy and support for the oppressed Iraqi nation, and will condemn the silence observed by international forums on the crimes perpetrated by the Iraqi Ba'thist regime, the insult to religious shrines and to a high-ranking religious authority, and the illegitimate presence of America in the Persian Gulf. [passage omitted]

Today's ceremony in Tehran will begin at 0900 [0530 GMT] at Imam Husayn Square.

Riyadh Embassy, Jeddah Consulate To Reopen

LD3103085791 Tehran IRNA in English 0739 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, March 31, IRNA—The Islamic Republic of Iran's Embassy and Consulate General in Riyadh and Jeddah will be reopened by Iran's Foreign Ministry's Director General for the Persian Gulf Region Mostafa Fumani who left here for Saudi Arabia Saturday afternoon.

Tehran and Riyadh restored diplomatic ties last Tuesday after a joint communique on resumption of relations was simultaneously issued in both the capitals earlier this month.

Iran-Saudi Arabia ties were severed after the massacre of over 400 Iranian pilgrims in Mecca in July 1987.

During his visit, Fumani, who heads a delegation, will also discuss issues of mututal interest, the question of the Iranian pilgrims to Mecca in particular.

MKO Members Clash With Revolutionary Guards

LD0104105891 Tehran IRNA in English 1014 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, Apr. 1, IRNA—A group of members of the outlawed Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) who attempted to infiltrate the Iranian territory in the West were engaged in armed clashes with Iranian Revolutionary Guards stationed north of Qasr-e Shirin Monday morning.

An informed military source speaking to IRNA said the Revolutionary Guards "routed the monafeqin (MKO), killed many of them and captured another group." He said the MKO forces had to retreat to their positions after sustaining great losses.

Today April 1 marks the Islamic Republic Day.

Khamene'i Promotes Security Forces Officers

LD0104112291 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 1 Apr 91

[Text] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, eminent leader of the Islamic revolution and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, received Interior Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam Nuri and a number of officials from the country's security forces before noon today on the Day of God, 1 April, the anniversary of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He presented the approved planned measures for the Islamic Republic of Iran's security forces, and the forces' uniforms and medals to the interior minister.

Also at that meeting, Reza Seyfollahi was promoted to the rank of brigadier general. In separate decrees, Brigadier General Mohammad Sohrabi, Brigadier General Reza Seyfollahi and Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad 'Ali Rahmani were appointed to the posts of commander of the security forces, commander of the security forces' intelligence unit, and head of the security forces' ideopolitical unit, respectively.

Regime Accused of Suspending Rushdie Decree

TA0104082291 (Clandestine) Iran's Flag of Freedom Radio in Persian 0330 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran political circles are saying that British businessman Roger Cooper, who is imprisoned in Tehran, will be released soon. In order to settle its differences with Britain, the Islamic Republic regime has suspended Ruhollah Khomeyni's decree calling for the death of Salman Rushdie, the British author of "The Satanic Verses."

Regime Said Seeking To Buy Arms From Italy

TA0104082491 (Clandestine) Iran's Flag of Freedom Radio in Persian 0330 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] We have learned that the Islamic Republic regime is seeking to purchase weapons and military equipment from Italy. According to this report, the leaders of the Islamic Republic regime used the opportunity of the visit by the Italian foreign minister to Tehran to inform him of their interest in purchasing arms from Italy.

Pakistan

Officials Suspect Indian Agents Behind Hijacking

BK3103150091 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 29 Mar 91 pp 1, 9

[From Kamran Khan]

[Text] Karachi, March 28—Senior security officials investigating the bizarre Singapore Airlines hijacking drama say there is still no evidence to implicate any senior PPP [Pakistan People's Party] leader or Asif Ali Zardari in the case, but circumstantial evidence is enough to suggest that the Indian external intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) masterminded the operation.

Meanwhile, officials familiar with the probe carried out so far have confirmed the suspicion that in his yesterday's Press conference Sindh Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali had confused the killed hijacker Javed Akhter with one involved in the 1981 PIA [Pakistan International

Airlines] hijacking case. It is now known that the hijacker involved in the recent case was Javed Akhter Kiyani and the security agencies had no file on him before yesterday.

A senior security source in the federal capital told this correspondent that no security agency in the country had a file on any of the terrorists involved in the Singapore Airline hijacking case.

But Pakistani security officials had documentary and physical evidence to prove that Indian intelligence service RAW had in the past two years reopened terrorist training camps for those extremists in at least one national political organisation who wanted to wage a war against Pakistani law-enforcing agencies or had an ambition to separate one province of the country.

It may be recalled that last year Pakistani security apparatus had made a significant breakthrough when it busted an Indian-sponsored terrorist network in interior Sindh. A number of terrorists arrested during a several weeks long operation had provided a rare might into the Indian operation.

Because of this investigation, the Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg had to go on record to state that roughly six thousand Pakistanis had been trained as terrorists across the borders.

These terrorists had been assigned the task of planting bombs at crowded places, engineering and fuelling ethnic and sectarian strife, collecting data on the communication networks and carrying out hijacking operations to catch international attention.

At least thrice this year the Airport Security Force was alerted about a possible hijacking attempt to seek the release of the detained political extremists.

On February 22, a red alert was declared at the Quaid-e-Azam international airport here following a tip-off from a foreign intelligence service that an attempt was most likely to be made to hijack PIA's London-bound flight. The flight was delayed for more than an hour as extremely tough security measures had to be taken to preempt the possible hijacking.

Based on these intelligence reports THE MUSLIM had carried a story on February 23, saying that a hijacking attempt was round the corner.

Security officials now say that a sophisticated hijacking operation like the one carried out on the Singapore Airlines during its flight from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore is not possible without the active support of an organisation fully aware of the international air routes and weak security links at various airports of the country.

Pakistan security officials feel that without this active support the hijackers woundn't have been able to acquire passports from different cities such as Karachi, Sialkot and Mirpur (Azad Kashmir) en route their journey to Kuala Lumpur via Bangkok.

Singaporean security officials, it is learnt, have also accepted Pakistani view that some people either at the Kuala Lumpur airport or in Bangkok played an active part to support the operation as the hijackers had a bag load of exposives and hand-grenades when they took control of the aircraft mid-way between the Malaysian capital and Singapore.

Reports late last night from Kuala Lumpur also suggested that the Malaysian authorities have also launched a big probe to find out as to how the Pakistani hijackers dodged the strong security at the Kuala Lumpur airport.

Bhutto Demands Impartial Probe in Hijacking Plot

BK3103051291 Karachi DAWN in English 30 Mar 91 pp 1, 7

[Text] Karachi, March 29—Leader of the Opposition Ms Benazir Bhutto asserted on Friday that she would not let the Singapore airliner's hijacking conspiracy against the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] fizzle out until the conspiratoral elements that masterminded it were exposed before the people through a high-powered, independent and impartial inquiry.

The main purpose behind the conspiracy was to force "me and my husband" to leave the country and live in exile abroad, she told newsmen at the airport here on arrival from Larkana.

The PPP Co-Chairman wondered why the Government felt shy of holding an independent and impartial inquiry when it claimed that it had no hand in the hijacking affair.

What she was in earnest about was that the people had a right to know about the factual position with regard to the airliner's hijacking and that they should be taken into confidence convincingly and earlier than expected.

Ms Bhutto by implication accused Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali of "engineering the hijacking plot" when she said that one who had the PDA [People's Democratic Alliance] MPAs [Members of Provincial Assembly] "kidnapped" was responsible for "hijacking" the Singapore airliner. "He, who had publicly confessed of taking drinks, considers himself above law," she pointed out.

"Who is she," she repeated her joke when a correspondent drew her attention to Jam Sadiq Ali's charge that the plane hijacking was done by Al-Zulfiqar, a "national and international organisation whose chief Benazir Bhutto is."

She thanked God that the "dropscene of the hijacking drama" occurred so soon otherwise, she said. The PTV [Pakistan Television] for a month would have telecast interviews of women and children and then "my husband Asif would have been forcibly whisked away abroad."

Ms Bhutto said that since August last year when her Governnment was toppled, she had been subjected to all kinds of pressure to leave "my people" in the lurch and live in exile abroad. When all their efforts failed, the

hijacking drama was enacted to dispossess her from the country's body-politic. "God be thanked for having saved me and my family and the whole plot has flopped," she remarked.

Lashing out at Jam Sadiq Ali and his provincial administration Ms Bhutto said "these are the persons who had the women tortured and instituted cooked-up cases against them, who had the (PPP) MPAs kidnapped and who indulged in open rigging in the Senate elections."

The PPP Co-Chairman asked how it was possible to know "instantly" the names and passports etc of the Pakistani hijackers "unless, of course, the hijackers were close associates of those who hatched the anti-PPP conspiracy."

Ms Bhutto took exception to a newspaper report saying that one of the hijackers was her OSD (Officer on Special Duty). Dubbing the news item as "concocted and baseless," she said she would have legal advice for seeking redress agianst the particular daily.

Denying categorically that the PPP had any hand in the hijacking affair, Ms Bhutto said hijacking was the most condemnable and heinous act. She demanded that those responsible for "kidnapping" five PPP MPAs and also Manzoor Wassan, Chief Whip of the Sindh PDA Assembly Party, should be tried under the International Act of Terrorism [as published] as also according to the law of the land.

Ms Bhutto said that she had been threatened off and on to leave the country on pain of herself being disqualified and her family members languishing in jail after every attempt to defeat her politically had failed. "I am on the right path, the oppressed people are on my side and I cannot be deterred from pursuing my peaceful, democratic and constitutional struggle," she asserted.

She expressed displeasure at the Fedral Minister Ejazul Haq's accusation that the PPP was also involved in the Bahawalpur air crash that killed Gen Ziaul Haq and others and advised him to trace the "real culprits," instead of making "wild allegations."

Ms Bhutto, however, reminded Ejazul Haq that the inquiry into the Bahawalpur tragedy was commissioned by the caretaker Governments of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Mr Nawaz Sharif, and not by the PPP Government. That inquiry had given absolutely no indication of the PPP's involvement in the said air crash and it had merely stated that the air crash was fifty per cent accidental and fifty per cent a part of conspiracy.

Ms Bhutto, however, said that if one were to perceive the criminal motive underlying the Bahawalpur aircrash, one would conclude in the historical perspective who the elements were who benefited from that tragedy. The People's Party certainly did not get into power, she added.

Alleges Persecution

BK0104025491 Hong Kong AFP in English 1702 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Lahore, Pakistan, March 31 (AFP)—Former premier Benazir Bhutto told a special court here Sunday that President Ghulam Ishaq Khan wanted to destroy her and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

She spoke after the court formally charged her with misusing air force aircraft to transport deputies during a failed no-confidence motion against her in the National Assembly in 1989.

The president, who dismissed Ms. Bhutto in August 1990 on charges of corruption and mismanagement, has filed several cases of alleged abuse of power during her 20-month stint in office.

Ms. Bhutto said the cases were filed because she had refused to leave the country or quit politics which, according to her, the president desired.

She said her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was arrested in a murder case and PPP leaders and workers were being "victimized" because she declined to "bow to the will" of her opponents.

Denying the charges against her as baseless, malafide, and discriminatory, Ms. Bhutto said she preferred to remain among her people no matter what the cost.

If found guilty, Ms. Bhutto can be disbarred from politics for as long as seven years.

In other cases before special courts in Lahore and Karachi, she faces charges such as misuse of secret funds, wrongful allotment of land for a hotel project, making irregular appointments and handing out undue benefits to party members.

After her statement, the one-judge special tribunal adjourned the hearing of the case till April 8.

Afghan Envoy Warns Against Aiding Rebels

BK3103145891 Lahore THE NATION in English 30 Mar 91 p 4

[From Shamim Shahid]

[Text] Peshawar—Abdul Qayoom, newly-appointed Afghan Consul has said that Pakistan should desist from Khowst war as such act could create hurdles in efforts aimed at restoring a peaceful atmosphere in the region.

The Afghan Consul in an interview with THE NATION on Thursday alleged that Pakistan and its army is supporting anti-revolutionary forces (Mujahidin) against the Afghan troops which is against the Geneva Accord signed indirectly between the two countries in early 1988. Elaborating his allegation, Abdul Qayoom said a few days ago a number of Pakistan army officers and Saudi advisers visited war fronts of Khowst along with Engineer Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and reviewed the military operations. During the visit, they assured moral support to the Mujahidin.

However, Mr Qayoom, who for the first time is posted as a diplomat in a foreign country asserted that brave Afghans would win the war like that of Jalalabad and Qandahar. He disclosed that the people of Khowst through a letter have assured Afghan President, Dr Najibullah that they would foil the attempts of anti-Afghan elements and would sacrifice their lives for the protection of their motherland. He said that to-date Afghan troops have made 243 Mujahidin as POWs and killed more than 180 in the 15-day long fight. He also refuted allegations of the enemies for capturing security posts around Khowst adding that government troops were inflicting heavy human and property losses on Pakistan backed so-called Mujahidin.

The Afghan diplomat charged that although world leaders are struggling for a peaceful atmosphere, Pakistan was still busy in hatching conspiracies against neighbour countries, which could harm peace efforts. He urged Pakistan government to honour the Geneva Accord and establish good ties with Afghanistan in the light of Dr Najibullah's proposals. He said that world witnessed that Afghan people can protect their homeland and as such Pakistan should play its due role in efforts to finding out a peaceful political solution to Afghan problem.

Mr Abdul Qayoom reminded that Afghan President Dr Najibullah and Prime Minister, Mr Khaliqyar have time and again expressed their desire for holding talks with Pakistan's government.

On American envoy, Robert Oakley's recent meeting with Prof. Sebghatullah Mojaddedid in Peshawar, he said they felt that the US agreed on finding out a political settlement to the Afghan issue.

For finding out a peaceful settlement to the problem, Afghan government is ready to hold meetings with the Opposition anywhere in the country, he added. He also claimed that in pursuance of the national reconciliation policy of Dr Najibullah, contacts have been established with 85 percent commanders of the Opposition. About 50 percent have stopped fighting while the rest of them are watching the situation. Meanwhile, after laying arms in Faryab province some 20 days back, 10,000 persons were now busy in farming and reconstruction works.

When diverted his attention towards the proposal of stoppage of arms both to Mujahidin and Afghan Government of Dr Najibullah, Mr Qayoom said that they were ready to honour such proposal with a condition that Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and France should stop arms supply to Opposition forces based in Peshawar and Quetta. He was of the view that these countries should press the Opposition for a ceasefire as war could not be stopped with suspension of arms, but with ceasefire from both sides.

Referring to developments in the Afghan policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Afghan Consul said that Iran brought positive changes in its Afghan policy soon after signing of the General Accord. This changes was a good omen for world peace, he added. He asserted that Pakistan should follow Iran's policy in Afghanistan. He opined that good and brotherly relations between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan could brought revolutionary changes in the lives of its people. [sentence as published]

Kashmir Assembly Dissolved; Elections 2 Jul

BK3103115791 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] The Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister, Mr. Mumtaz Hussain Rathore, has announced that the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly and the Cabinet have been dissolved and fresh elections will be on the 2d of July this year.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad this afternoon, he said he recommended the dissolution of the assembly and the cabinet under the constitution to the Azad Kashmir president, who signed it today.

Mr. Mumtaz Hussain Rathore said he took the decision in the best interest of the (?state) so that the future elected government should concentrate on development activities as well as [words indistinct] toward the freedom struggle in occupied Kashmir. He said he would form a caretaker government within the next few days. The Azad Kashmir chief election commissioner would conduct the next election under his supervision.

Sri Lanka

Government Forces Kill Over 100 Tamil Guerrillas

BK3103072491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0712 GMT 31 Mar 91

[Text] Colombo, March 31 (AFP)—Heavily armed soldiers, backed by helicopters, shot dead more than 100 Tamil tiger guerrillas in a fierce gunbattle in northwest Sri Lanka, a military spokesman here said Sunday.

An army patrol ran into a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ambush at Veepankulam in coastal Mannar District Saturday triggering the battle, the spokesman said.

"Our boys went out on a clearing operation and encountered the terrorists. We rushed reinforcements. Helicopters were also used to counter the attack and we killed over 100 terrorists," the spokesman said. He corrected initial reports which said 20 soldiers and two officers were missing in action, saying 30 soldiers were wounded in the surprise encounter.

"The LTTE too got reinforcements. But helicopters were used to neutralise them," the spokesman said.

A rival Tamil group, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), said it intercepted LTTE radio messages Sunday which spoke of 11 LTTE fatalities in the latest incident in Mannar District.

Dharmalingam Siddarthan, leader of the PLOTE's political wing, said LTTE commanders in Mannar made

radio contact with Jaffna, further north, to report the capture of weapons after killing or wounding over 20 soldiers.

"We intercepted these messages in Vavuniya (in the north) Sunday morning. They say 11 of their men were killed in action," Mr. Siddarthan said. PLOTE cadres are cooperating with security forces in the drive against the LTTE.

The military spokesman said the latest encouter was close to the area where 10 days ago the LTTE tried to capture two key army camps. The military says at least 300 guerrillas were killed when soldiers backed by the airforce and the navy repulsed the attacks on Silavathurai and Kokkupadayan army camps last week.

Security force losses were put at 26 soldiers and one sailor killed and about 60 wounded. The LTTE said they lost only 20 men and claimed to have killed 50 soldiers.

Since then, troops backed by helicopters have been conducting mopping up operations in the region advancing towards guerrilla- held territory under curfew amid stiff resistance in several places.

Tamil sources said about 200 to 300 wounded LTTE activists had been brought to the Jaffna hospital after their abortive attacks on the two army camps.

"The Mannar attacks had been very badly planned by the LTTE. It was easy for the army to get reinforcements by sea. The LTTE suffered heavily and it has been a severe blow to their morale," Mr. Siddarthan said. He said dozens of LTTE cadres were deserting their ranks and fleeing the Jaffna peninsula, the LTTE's main stronghold, and going south.

"These young boys come to Vavuniya and we allow them to go through our check points because they are leaving the (LTTE) organisation for good," Mr. Siddarthan said.

Hundreds of PLOTE cadres together with members of virtually all other Tamil groups have been targetted by the LTTE which is determined to lead the Tamil separatist campaign in Sri Lanka's northeast where minority Tamils are concentrated.

The LTTE is fighting to establish a separate state in the embattled northeast and resumed its guerrilla campaign on June 11 when 14 months of secret peace talks with Colombo broke down. Since then, more than 6,150 people have died in bitter fighting.

Further on Clashes

BK3103092091 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0741 GMT 31 Mar 91

["OANA/Pool Item]

[Text] Colombo, 31 Mar (LANKAPUVATH)—One hundred terrorists were reported killed, as the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] suffered another major defeat, the second in only eleven days.

Official sources told LANKAPUVATH 100 LTTE cadres were killed by the security forces in fierce fighting which followed a terrorist attack on a security forces patrol Saturday [30 March] at Veppankulam, five miles from Silavathura, where the Tigers were subjected to their biggest defeat eleven days ago.

The sources said 30 soldiers were wounded in the fighting. They said the scene of the LTTE's latest rout was a point south of Veppankulam, between Silavathura and Murunkan. They said both the security forces and the LTTE had brought in reinforcements after the initial encounter and they joined in battle.

Government troops backed by air support overcame stiff enemy resistance through overall battlefield superiority and forced the LTTE to withdraw in disarray after suffering heavy losses.

Official sources said LTTE weapons, fuel and other logistics smuggling operations from south India had been hard hit by the security forces being in control of the entire north western coastal belt extending to the Talaimannar Pier, the closest point from India across the Palks Strait.

Top LTTE Aide Killed in 'Internal Conflict'

BK3103090291 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0737 GMT 31 Mar 91

["OANA/Pool"]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 31 (LANKAPUVATH)—The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamila Eelam] is facing one of its bitter moments now with the death of Senkathir, a top aide of LTTE supremo Prabhakaran. Jaffna Tamils were shocked by the sudden and unexplained death of this leading LTTE military commander. The 'SUNDAY OBSERVER' further states Senkathir, reportedly from an oppressed caste was a founder member of the LTTE and a member of its politburo. He was also LTTE's deputy chief of Vadamarachchi area and loyal friend of Prabhakaran. Black flags and white flags have come up at Karaveddy, the birth place of Senkathir. Informed Jaffna sources said that Senkathir had been killed in an internal conflict of the LTTE. Senkathir was 34 years old at the time of his death and was the father of two children. The people want to know the reason for his killing and there is general chaos particularly in Karaveddy. This murder shows that Prabhakaran is losing control over the LTTE. One of his closest aides has been slain, the sources said. Some of the members of Senkathir's community have also been taken into custody by LTTE cadres.

LTTE Accused of Using Indian Fishing Boats

BK0104114791 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0751 GMT 1 Aapr 91

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, April 01 (LANKAPUVATH)—With intensive patrolling by both the Indian and Lankan

navies of the shallow sea separating Tamil Nadu in India and the Tamil north of Sri Lanka. Tiger guerrillas avoid venturing out to get vital supplies for their war against the Lankan government forces. Today's DAILY NEWS in a despatch from its correspondent in Madras states, but they have been able to commandeer Indian fishing boats to smuggle in one of their crucial needs, diesel, say sources in Rameswaram, on the Indian coast. [sentence as received] A local newsman said over the phone from Rameswaram: "LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] boats come in very rarely these days, but our fishermen are doing the job for them. They buy diesel for about Rs. [rupees] 4.50 (in Indian rupees) here and sell it for Rs. 1.50 (in Sri Lankan currency). [sentence as received] The LTTE pay in gold and the exchange could take place at convenient places somewhere in the middle of the sea." But with the stepping up of vigilance by the Indian Navy, with three naval vessels stationed off Rameswaram, even this is badly affected, the newsman said. "And there has led to some anti-government feeling among fishermen here."

A Madras based correspondent of a Bombay English language daily, who recently visited the area, spoke of a 'DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazagham—a Tamil Nadu political party] wave' in Rameswaram, as a result of the curbs put on smuggling by the governor's regime, following the overthrow of the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) government in January this year, for alleged links with the LTTE. The Indian minister of state for home (internal) affairs, Subodh Kant Sahay, told newsmen in Madras on Thursday that, thanks to the local peoples' cooperation, the government has been able to check the activities of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu. "They had spread their network throughout the state, and therefore it is not easy to break their back completely but none of the coastal districts is under their control now," Mr. Sahay said. Since February this year, 120 LTTE have been held, 37 of them under the National Security Act [NSA] and 118 of their local supporters have also been arrested, three of them locked up under the NSA. "We have created considerable fear in the LTTE in the last two months and this is a remarkable achievement," Mr. Sahay said. On Tuesday, Rameswaram police found evidence of an Indian having been trained in guerrilla warfare by the LTTE in northern Sri Lanka. They arrested Noel alias Vijayan, a 28-year-old local Tamil youth with an AK-47 rifle and 28 rounds of ammunition. On interrogation, Vijayan said that in 1988 and 1989, he was in Pesalai, in northern Sri Lanka and had undergone training in arms handling. It is not yet clear as to what Vijayan and his friend from Pesalai, Vinod, planned to do in Tamil Nadu, but the two quarreled and Vijayan sold one of the two AK-47 in Madurai City. A police party has been sent to Madurai to investigate the sale of this assault rifle and a standard weapon. There is a search on for Vinod too, the source in Rameswaram said.

Defense Official on LTTE Plans for Offensive

BK2903130291 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Mar 91

[Text] The CID [Criminal Investigation Department] is presently investigating a conspiracy by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to launch a massive offensive agains the Sri Lanka Government. The LTTE had purchased a large consignment of military equipment consiting of rocket launchers, antiaircraft weapons, and ammunition in Europe and had arranged for their transport on the ship MV Golden Bird which the LTTE had purchased on the 20th of October last year. The Gulf crisis interfered with this shipment, and their attempts to get the weapons failed. Another consignment of equipment for their guerrilla forces had been arranged from Singapore. This was detected by the Malaysian authorities on the 13th of December last year. These details were disclosed by the secretary to the Ministry of Defense, General Cyril Ranatunge, at the weekly Cabinet news briefing in Colombo yesterday. He added that from the equipment seized, there was no doubt that they were planning attacks on Sri Lankan security forces.

General Ranatunge said that at Silavatturai and Kokkuppadayan, military and senior cadres of the LTTE launched a major attack hoping to overrun the Army. Army troops assisted by senior officials of the Navy had found 115 bodies in uniforms and other equipment. They recovered 16 T-56 rifles, 10 T-81 rifles, four AK-47 rifles, and two G-3 rifles. They also recovered 13 vehicles and seven tractors.

In skirmishes in Vavuniya, three soldiers died and six were injured and some weapons were lost. General Ranatunge also announced that a large number of LTTE cadres had submitted their resignation.

Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, presidential adviser on international affairs, said that an inquiry is under way regarding undeclared explosives and ammunition on board the vessel MV (Matrilina) which is now lying in the Colombo harbor. The crew has been detained and the cargo seized and handed over to the Army for storage.

General Ranatunge said that four Muslims were abducted in Amparai and the offensive is on in many areas. He said the LTTE was responsible for General Ranjan Wijeratne's assassination and several VIP's have also been targeted for assassination. The Akkaraipattu bomb explosion in the fish market has left five people dead and 13 wounded. In Batticaloa, 10 terrorists were killed in an ambush.

The security forces in a lightning air, sea, and land operation, code-named Sea Breeze, successfully stormed the LTTE's stronghold of Keerimalai, west of the Jaffna port town of Kankesanturai, and captured it yesterday. Army Commander Lieutenant General Hamilton Wanasinghe told LANKAPUVATH that eight terrorists were killed and a large quantity of weapons were seized in this one-hour strike. Troops backed by the Air Force helicopters on the southern flank and naval gunboats on

the coastal western flank seized the LTTE bastion in a well-planned and executed operation.

President Partially Revokes Emergency Regulations

BK3003114691 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 30 Mar 91

[Text] In keeping with past practice and after having reviewed the security situation in the country, the president revoked a number of emergency regulations throughout the island, except in the northern and eastern provinces, effective from midnight yesterday. This will make it possible for the campaigners, the candidates, and the voters to participate in the local government election process without any fear of restrictions and in conformity with the election laws. The Emergency Prevention of Subversive Political Activity Regulation no. 1 of 1990 which imposed certain restrictions on engaging in political activities, entering or remaining in workplaces, holding any meetings, rallies, demonstrations or processions and pasting any posters, placards, or paintings stand revoked. Among the other emergency regulations that have been revoked are the Emergency Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers Regulation no. 13 which restricted the conducting of processions and meetings; the Emergency Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers Regulation no. 26 on sedition and indictment; the Emergency Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers Regulations nos. 28 and 29 which restricted the display of slogans, the distribution of leaflets, and communication of rumors and false statements with the intention of overthrowing the government of Sri Lanka by unlawful means and which are prejudicial to public security, public order, or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community.

SAARC Group To Monitor Local Elections

BK3103091791 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0755 GMT 31 Mar 91

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 31 (LANKAPUVATH)—Members of the independent observer group from SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] countries who are here at the invitation of President Ranasinghe Premadasa to oversee the forthcoming local government elections called on President Ranasinghe Premadasa at Sucharitha Mawatha yesterday. The team was accompained by Mr. Chandrananda de Silva, commissioner of elections. The members included Justice Dorab Patel from Pakistan, a former supreme court judge, former acting chief justice and acting elections commissioner who had served as an observer at the 1988 presidential election and 1989 general election in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mehmood Mandiwalla, barrister at Sind High Court of Pakistan, Mr. Niaz A. Naik of Pakistan, a former foreign secretary and Pakistan ambassador to the UN and several other countries who had serveed as an observer at the Bangladesh elections, Mr. Abdur Rauf Khan of Pakistan, a former Pakistan ambassador to Sri Lanka, Mr. Partha Gosh of India, member of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, visiting fellow of the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, Mr. Mahesh Bush of India, formerly of the Indian Administrative Service and presently chairman of the National Centre for Human Settlements and Environment, Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed of Bangladesh, former foreign secretary who has served on the observer team for the presidential election in 1988 and general election of 1989.

President Premadasa thanked the members for consenting to serve on the observer group. Their presence, he said, would help to give added confidence to the voters. The president said that he had instructed all authorities to be impartial and that all contestants be treated equally and ensure a free and fair election. The president said that the forthcoming local elections signalled a new experience in decentralised administration when a wider section of the people would be given the chance to select who should run their local bodies. For the first time in election history sufficient youth representation has been ensured by statute when all parties had to nominate a fair percentage of youth to contest the elections. Of the 15,065 candidates contesting the local elections, 6,038 are youth below the age of 35 years. The president added that people made great sacrifices during the presidential and general elections to safeguard democracy due to terrorism. They now had the opportunity to exercise their franchise in an atmosphere free of terrorism.